'Magnificent 5' may swing vote for Senate head

By Michael Lim Ubac

MOVE OVER WEDNESDAY CLUB, HERE comes the "Magnificent 5," a group of senators who may just deliver the swing vote in the election of the new Senate president.

The emerging power bloc in the Senate is composed of Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri, Edgardo Angara, Loren Legarda, Ramon Revilla Jr. and Lito Lapid, who is banging on in the 11th place in the senatorial races.

MAGNIFICENT 5 / A12

Strong peso to stall exports recovery **BUSINESS** / B1

Noynoy Aquino's plans for education **LEARNING** / H1

Last 3 winning senators may be proclaimed today **NEWS** / A2

300 PCOS men seek payment for work **ACROSS** / A18

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, May 17, 2010 • 12 sections / Vol. 25 / No. 158 P18

Barangay chair needs 'barong' for new role

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer General Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The barangay captain is ready and willing but has absolutely nothing to wear.

If presidential front-

BARANGAY A13

Anti-Noy Congress seen

Aquino may need to form new political alliances

By Christine O. Avendaño and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE OPPOSITION WILL likely lead both houses of Congress under a Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III presidency unless he manages to form new alliances with his power over pork barrel allocations, according to lawmakers.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., the defeated presidential candidate, is certain to get back his post as Senate president, and President-turned-Representative Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will possibly become Speaker of the House of Representatives, according to Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Santiago said in an interview over dzRB yesterday that Villar had the "numbers" to regain the Senate presidency while Mr. Arroyo, being a shrewd leader, may just climb the House leadership.

But she said that Mr. Arroyo could only be the next Speaker if her allegiances would hold.

"You know politics. Even if they (Arroyo's allies) belong to parties against Aquino, the minute he is proclaimed president, they would change parties because you get so many benefits (as-

ANTI-NOY A13

A VIEW FROM THE TOP Presidential race front-runner Benigno Aquino III takes a break on the last day of his campaign sortie from Capas to Concepcion town in his home province of Tarlac. EFTA/ALEXIS ROMERO

'People's President' embraces destiny

By Thelma Simon San Juan
Lifestyle Editor

(Last of two parts)

IF THE PRESIDENCY WERE HIS grand, consuming ambition, he could have kept the blood-stained, tattered polo shirt we had been reminding him to keep for posterity.

When we asked Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III about two months ago where the shirt was, he sounded disinterested and said it must have gotten lost or thrown away as he and his mom were preparing to leave the Aquino House (the official residence of the Cory Aquino administration) to return to Times Street (the family home in Quezon City).

But why, when it's a dramatic piece of your life?

"It stinks!" he said, simply put.

A regular guy who's not full of himself—there's a side to Aquino the public hardly knows in the three decades that his family has lived on the national stage, perhaps because he never deliberately hopped on that stage.

Had he been a "trapo," he could have paraded the shirt around for maximum media mileage and votes.

That was the shirt he was wearing

PEOPLE'S A22

With Corona snub, Aquino risks showdown with high court

By Amando Doronila

THE TURBULENCE OF THE TRANSFER of power of Edsa I revisits the takeover of Sen. Benigno Aquino III as the next Philippine president.

A constitutional crisis looms large ahead of the inauguration of Aquino on June 30 over the appointment by departing President Macapagal-Arroyo of Associate Justice Renato Corona Jr. as the next Chief Justice of the Supreme Court upon the retirement today of Chief Justice Reynato Puno.

ANALYSIS

Aquino has signaled he does not recognize Mr. Arroyo's appointment and has indicated he is considering taking his oath of office before the barangay captain in his home province, Tarlac, rather than before Corona.

If Aquino takes this step, he would be breaking tradition under which most Philippine presidents were sworn into office by the Chief Justice.

When his mother, Corazon Aquino, took her oath of office after the ouster of President Ferdinand Marcos in the February 1986 People Power Revolution, she also broke tradition and chose a junior associate justice, Claudio Teehankee, to administer the oath to mother her scorn of the Marcos-dominated court during his dictatorship.

Cresenzo Aquino made this decision after Marcos staged his own

WITH CORONA A10

BANGKOK BATTLE A badly wounded man during clashes between demonstrators and security forces in Bangkok is carried to safety. AFP

25 DEAD IN CLASHES

Thai Red Shirts seek talks

BANGKOK—THAI PROTESters on Sunday said they were ready for UN-supervised talks with the government if the Army stopped shooting after three days of clashes that had killed 25 people and turned Bangkok into a battleground.

The comments from a leader of the so-called Red Shirts came minutes after the Thai government announced it was abandoning its plan to impose a curfew in Bangkok as fighting raged in two areas of the city of 15 million people, trapping panicked residents and raising the risk of a broader civil conflict.

"We call on the government to cease fire and pull out troops. We are ready to enter a negotiation process immediately," National Isshai, a Red Shirt leader, told supporters.

"We have no other condition. We do not want any more losses," he added.

The government's immedi-

TIMES A11

Polls show passion for democracy

By Ceci Cruz
Contributor

THE LAST TIME I WAS IN THE Philippines for an election, I was 6 years old and it was 1986. Needless to say, I didn't quite appreciate my front-row seat to the unfolding of Philippine history.

COMMENTARY

Mostly, I remember being upset that my parents didn't let me go with my cousins, who managed to get their picture taken sitting on top of a tank at Edsa while I was stuck at home.

By 2001, I was already a college student taking up political science at McGill University and watching the street demonstrations and mounting opposition to then President Joseph Estrada from my living room in Montreal.

Although the eventual ouster of Estrada was hailed as Edsa II, a throwback to the original People Power Revolution, to me the differences between the two events were more striking than their similarities.

The first was undeniably a triumph for democracy, but the

POLLS A22

Web wizard helps people in distress

By Ruby Villaviencio-Pasion
Contributor

FROM QUAKE-DEVASTATED HAITI to the killing fields of Darfur to hurricane-ravaged New Orleans, a Filipino-American "techie-preneur" shows how the Internet can be used to respond quickly and effectively to calamities.

Tubio Benjamin, 30, formerly from flood-prone Malabon City, is an Internet security expert who uses his cyber proficiency to raise emergency funds to aid victims of disasters and social injustice, as well as other advocacies.

Now based in San Francisco, and enjoying the perks and trappings of financial success, Benjamin has been described by colleagues as a "specialty se-

WEB WIZARD A12

PACMAN'S SHOW Boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao's mother Dionisia performs on her birthday during his victory party after being proclaimed Sarangani congressman. (See story on Page A11) AFP

Second FRONTPAGE

Last 3 senators may be proclaimed today

By Lolit B. Solaverio and Christine O. Avendaño

THE LAST THREE OF THE INCOMING BATCH OF 12 senators are expected to be proclaimed today, just one week after the May 10 polls, as the Commission on Elections (Comelec) continued with the relatively fast pace of its canvass of election returns.

The Comelec believes it could proclaim the last three senators since only three million votes are left to be canvassed, said the poll agency's spokesperson James Jimenez yesterday.

The Comelec on Saturday proclaimed the top nine winning candidates for senator. All but one were familiar faces returning to the upper chamber of Congress.

Comelec officials did not venture on the National Board of Canvassers on Sunday but the poll body's computer servers continued to accept results from the provincial boards of canvassers.

"Hopefully, we can get enough members to proclaim [all the senators-elect] by Monday," Jimenez told reporters.

He said the Comelec may not want to complete the canvass of the three million remaining votes if the figures at hand would not affect the rankings of the ten three winning senators and the candidates trailing them.

"If the remaining figures would not be significant to the final count, they are will not proclaiming," Jimenez said.

Based on the Comelec's last count, former Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, incumbent Sen. Lito Lapid and incumbent Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III have a good chance of making it into the Magic 12.

Osmeña had 10,996,061 votes, Lapid 10,307,121 and Guingona 9,646,332 votes.

As numbers 13 and 14, respectively, were Rep. Francisco Ilamanzon with 8,381,125 votes and Rufy Biazon with 8,148,689.

The nine who were proclaimed earlier were Juanco Ejercito Jr., Jinggoy Estrada, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Juan Ponce Enrile, Pia Cayetano, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Ralph Recto and Vicente Sotto III.

The proclamations of local and national election winners have also taken place in record time with the first-ever poll automation in the country executing the ballots and transmitting the results in record time.

The proclamations of electoral fraud and manipulation remain, although the members have been reduced.

And even with the assumption to office of 12 new senators, there would probably be three empty seats in the Senate hall.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV is detained on rebellion charges while Sen. Panfilo Lacson is hiding abroad, dodging murder charges. The third seat will likely be Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III's, who is leading the presidential race and will likely have to leave the Senate.

Questions have been raised as to whether Aquino's seat in the Senate could be filled by the senatorial candidate who would rank 13th in the balloting.

Sen. Manuel Roxas or Sen. Santiago said yesterday that could be possible if Congress passes a concurrent resolution, while Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile disagreed, saying a special election should be held for the vacated seat.

Interviewed over dzBB radio, Santiago initially disagreed the 13th candidacy could be proclaimed. Aquino's replacement but changed her position when told this happened in the 2001 elections when Congress passed a concurrent resolution.

The 2004 elections saw 13 senators proclaimed by the Comelec, with the last senator the replacement of Sen. Teofisto Guingona Jr. who was appointed vice president by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Santiago said this could be done again "in one sense" but the acknowledged that she did not know if Congress would pass a concurrent resolution for this case.

"The general rule is you can do anything unless prohibited by the Constitution," she said.

But Enrile hinted in a special election.

"The ones who elect a senator are the people and not Congress," said Enrile in a separate interview after over 6,000.

NUNS AT FOREFRONT AGAIN (SEE STORY ON PAGE A4)

Catholic nuns encode election returns transmitted to the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting command center in Manila Saturday as the parallel count being conducted by the Commission on Elections' citizens' arm of the results of the May 10 polls. As of midnight Saturday, the PPCRV had counted the votes from 48,943 of 76,475 clustered precincts (90.14%). Yesterday the PPCRV volunteers took a much needed break. (Story on Page A1)

GMA to make last trip

By Christian V. Esguerra

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO is out done traveling yet. She set to make a final appearance on the world stage as incumbent's World Economic Forum on East Asia to be held in Vietnam.

Presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo yesterday said Mrs. Arroyo would take the opportunity to invite more foreign businessmen to invest in the Philippines—a move that should be benefited in the next administration.

The forum is set for June 6-7 in Ho Chi Minh City.

"We will trumpet the success of our elections which, we hope, will boost investor confidence in our country," said Saludo to Filipinos.

"It is also important to keep mentioning our good economic conditions, our strong economic fundamentals, our strong peso and international reserves," he said.

The Palace official advised the next president to continue the important progress initiated by Ms Arroyo, such as the conditional cash transfer for the poorest Filipinos.

Saludo said the next administration should also work to establish a final peace agreement with the Moro rebels in Mindanao, and focus on further lowering the country's budget deficit.

Binay won't join Erap protest

By Christian V. Esguerra

IS FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada's protest actions against the unofficial outcome of the presidential race during hours is his running mate, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay?

Binay's camp yesterday dismissed itself from Estrada's claim of massive electronic cheating in the country's first automated election, the partial results of which showed Estrada trailing in the presidential race but Binay leading for the vice presidency.

Binay's spokesperson, Lito Atienza, said the supporters of the mayor's closest rival, Sen. Mar Roxas, should not tie Estrada's accusations to the outcome of votes for the vice presidential race, because "they are two different things."

"This could have been computerized. If there was cheating, it was possible that it involved only one (the presidential race)," Atienza said. "If President Estrada was cheated, it doesn't mean that everybody else was cheated. If we pursue this to its ridiculous end, then any mayor of a local town could say, 'so even my victory was tainted.'"

Atienza said Binay' camp came with a plea purportedly using Estrada's complaint to question the credibility of the votes fulfilling that to his chagrin, Binay ahead by an 800,000-vote margin over the senator.

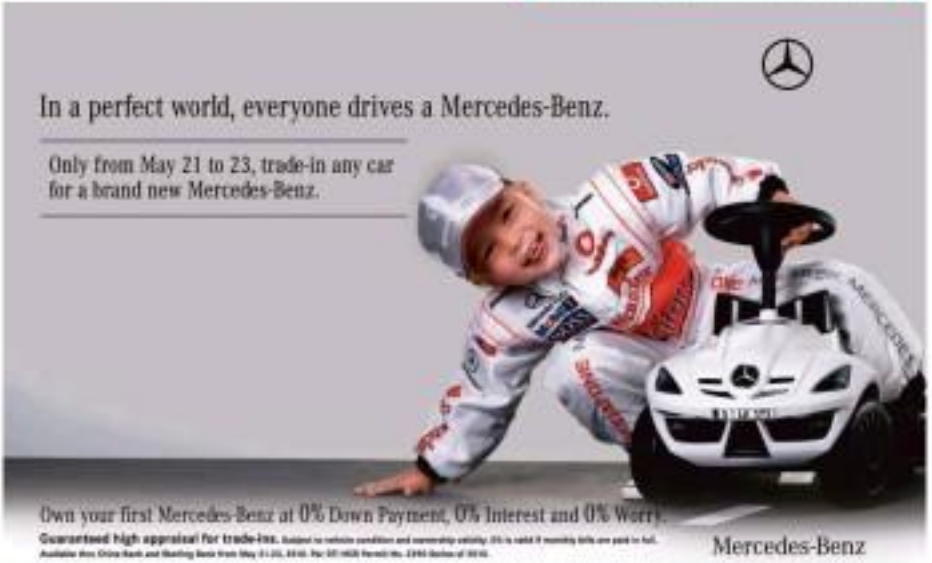
Atienza said Estrada should present proof that the election results had been manipulated.

"He (Estrada) is saying that he's cautioned many reports of cheating. But even if we're allies, we can't just say that we were cheated. Period. We should say 'We were cheated and here are the documents to prove it,' he told the reporters in Filipino.

"President Erap, I think, will be the first to honor and to accept that in this kind of belligerent, you don't just say that you were cheated," he said.

"If there was cheating, that would be proved or disproved on the basis of by victim of documents and data, not based on verbal claims (cheap talk)," Atienza said.

Despite trailing from runner-here Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III by more than five million votes in partial and unofficial canvassing, Estrada has refused to concede, insisting that he was cheated.



Puno tells Corona: Prove independence of Supreme Court

By Dona Pazolanga and Christian V. Esguerra

AMID CHARGES that the Supreme Court had become an "Arroyo court," outgoing Chief Justice Reynato Puno told his successor, Associate Justice Renato Corona, that his "biggest challenge" would be to prove that the tribunal could be trusted to be independent.

Corona is expected to take his oath of office before President Macapagal-Arroyo today, even as the political opposition maintains his selection violated the constitutional ban on "midnight" appointments.

Puno, home by the mandatory court retirement age, today

[illegible] Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who once served as Mr. Arroyo's chief of staff, will head the judiciary for eight years, would expand the court's membership to 18 justices.

Corona is expected to take his oath of office before President Macapagal-Arroyo today, even as the political opposition maintains his selection violated the constitutional ban on "midnight" appointments.

Puno, home by the mandatory court retirement age today — [

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Pacman: I'll fight as boxer, congressman

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—WORLD BOXING champion Manny Pacquiao believes he can continue his phenomenal career in the ring while fulfilling his dream of helping his poor country-men as a politician.

"It just needs discipline. You just need time management," he said.

Still on a high after winning a congressional seat representing impoverished Sarangani province, Pacquiao, 31, said he would continue fighting—both as an athlete and legislator for the people.

"There are many problems in our province, many people who need help and, one by one, we will decide what to do to help them," said Pacquiao on a grand celebration in his hometown last night.

"I am happy that I won and that people voted for me. Now I have a duty to serve my countrymen," said Pacquiao, known to Filipinos, who grew up dirt-poor and losing brought him world fame and riches.

"My agenda is livelihood programs, education, health care and medical assistance. I am thinking of all kinds of bills to pass in Congress."

The party at a convention center attended by more than 1,000 people, marked the 32nd birthday of his mother, Dionisia, and his landslide victory in last week's national elections.

Pacquiao also said he would continue making commercial endorsements, a sideline that helped make him the world's sixth highest-paid athlete last year with earnings of $40 million, according to Forbes magazine.

But asked what his priority would be among his many occupations, Pacquiao said: "For now I will focus on my service."

Pacquiao has long dreamed of a political career, saying he was driven by a fierce desire to help the poor and that public office would be his way of paying society back for the support Filipinos have given him.

Immediately after his election victory was confirmed last week, Pacquiao said he would give in to his mother's wishes and fight just one more time—in a long-awaited bout with 33-year-old American Floyd Mayweather Jr.

However, Pacquiao limited he might still have some more fights left in him.

"My mother gave me one more fight. I respect my Mama but it is up to me whether to continue boxing or not," he said. -YY

Correction

IN THE MAY 16 ISSUE, a felony story on Page 4-D—"2C civil candidates seek new mayoral votes of poll results"—misstated the occupation of a candidate for Quezon City councilor. The candidate's name is John Lesaca—not Lozano.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 17, 2010
7th Week of Easter

Let the deep roar and its fullness;
the world and those who live in it.
Let the rivers clap their hands;
the mountains shout for joy together
before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with justice
and the peoples with equity.

—Psalm 98:7-9

The disciples said to Jesus, "Now you are speaking plainly and not in veiled language. Now we see that you know all things, even before we question you. Because of this we believe that you came from God."

Jesus answered them, "See, my hour has arrived. The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

"I have told you these things, so that you may have peace. You will have trouble in the world, but, trust! I have overcome the world."

—John 16:29-33

"...I will be left alone. But I am not really alone because the Father is with me."

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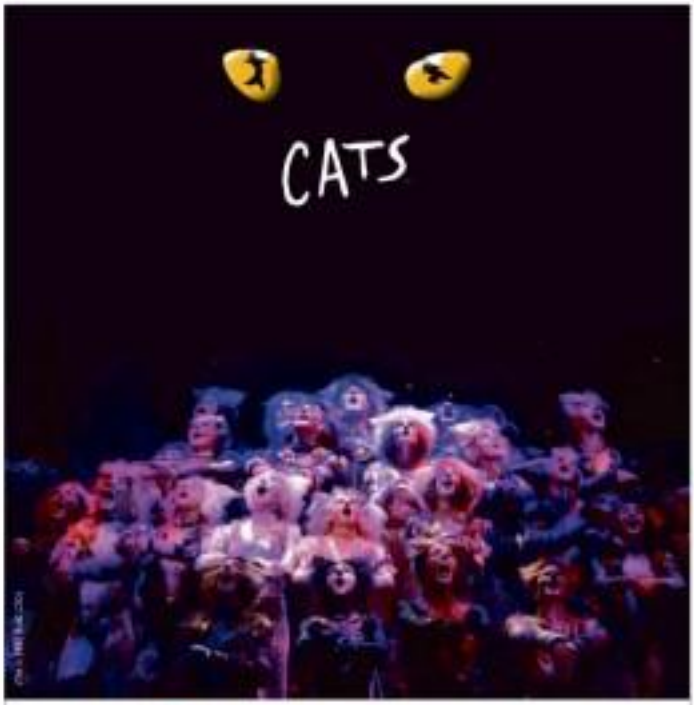

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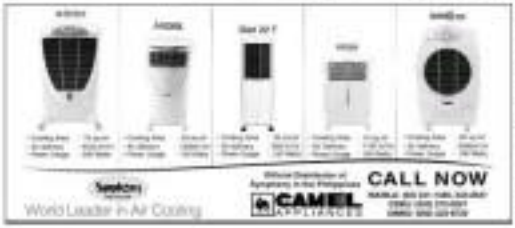
Watchdogs call for probe of 'poll irregularities'



By Nikko Dizon, Jeremaiah Opiniano and Leslie Saleworks

DESPITE THE FAST TALLYING AND announcement of the May 10 election results, poll watchdog groups yesterday said it was too soon for the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to claim correct victory.

In a statement, the election watchdog Kontra Daya said the election may "brought with pride, hope," and called for an investigation into irregularities noted before and during Election Day.

The group urged the Comelec to look into the distribution of "faulty" compact flash (CF) cards on Election Day which delayed the reading and transmission of results; the failure of certain Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs) to use UV-embroidered fingers to verify the authenticity of the ballots; the actual number of reported disenfranchised voters; and the many cases of malfunctioning precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines.

"While it is acknowledged that the transmission and initial tallying of results were fast, the whole automated process was fraught with problems," the group's statement said.

The Bantay Kita, a group of UP Iskwiters, Ateneo Daya noted that the Comelec spent P58 million on the lumps to strengthen security after problems in the printing of the ballots made it difficult for the PCOS machines to read the security marks.

Goodbye taxpayer money

The assured EV lumps caused such jam taxpayer money down the drain but possibly compromised security during the polls, the group said.

Comelec Dean also said different groups had pegged the number of people who were disenfranchised or not allowed to vote for one reason or another from 2.5 million to five million, mostly first-time voters.

The Comelec must likewise account for reported ballots and controversies the reasons for the rejection, the group said.

The poll body must also determine the reasons for the malfunction of machines and "therefore the degree of fraud inside TIM's account-ability," it added.

Kontra Daya urged the Comelec to review its clustering of precincts wherein the long queues "greatly contributed to the slow and often disorderly voting process" in several precincts nationwide.

Another watchdog movement organization, the Center for People Empowerment in Governance (Cenpeg), called on the Comelec to stop destroying the compact flash cards that malfunctioned during the May 3 final testing and testing of the PCOS machines.

Cenpeg, chaired by Retired Adm. Rene Rando Gonzales, said the destruction of cards should be ceased to find out what happened. The Comelec is destroying valuable evidence needed for auditing and examination of the poll automation exercises, added Bobby Tuazon, Cenpeg director for policy studies.

And Bro. Eddie Villanueva, the People's Movement for Change (Pagbabago) joined in the clamor for an independent audit of the technology used on May 10.

Dagdag Bilang, spouse of the Comelec's Fe Principal and Democrito Barcelon thus not foreign observers to witness provisions on May 10, said senator and Team would have occurred because of the "rushed, ill-tested, incompletely certified and therefore unreasonable" automated election system.

"By no means was the unsupported declaration by electoral an unqualified success without any proof to claim that the electronic result failures with the actual votes cast. The counting integrity of election precincts covered seven past days claims under a cloud of doubt," said Dagdag Bilang spokesperson Roland Tolentino, dean of the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication.

But Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said the poll body could already claim success and had pretty much proven its critics wrong.

"If we did what they wanted us to do, then we only proved one thing, that we have to follow instructions. But we did it the way we wanted to do it, the way we said we would do it. So we proved them wrong. We succeeded. And the nation victory reverse," Jimenez told reporters.

Sweet and satisfying

"If we had followed everything they said, it would not have been as sweet and satisfying as this because this is something that we decided we wanted to do," he said.

As for the glitches, Jimenez said these were not to inherent problems with the system.

"Automation was never really an issue even from human participation. You need people to activate things. You need people to move cards around. That's where the errors are creeping up, not in the system," he said.

He pointed out that the outcome of election system worked "perfectly." Since the much fewer errors in the transmission from the precinct to the municipal, provincial and national board of canvassers, which sometimes included meeting some parts of the machine.

As for the Comelec's critics, Jimenez said the poll body was just focusing on what it accomplished.

"As far as we are concerned, we are only concerned with the fact that we did it right. And that's the most important thing for us," he said.

Smartmatic can't collect until after Congress review

By Gil Cabunagan

SMARTMATIC-TIM MUST FIRST UNTIL 40 yet Congress shall have assessed its performance in the May 10 automated elections before it could expect to be paid in full by the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Speaker Prospero Nograles said Congress will ask Smartmatic to disclose why its subcontractors were, particularly the ones that provided the precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines, several of which suffered glitches, and the flash cards that initially couldn't read the ballots.

The Comelec should not fully pay Smartmatic for the automated elections until the Congress oversight joint committee has given [the company] a clean bill of health on the automated polls, Smartmatic must make public to whom it subcontracted their subcontractors and flash cards," said Nograles in a text message to reporters.

The House of Representatives and the Senate are set to convene in joint session on May 24, a week earlier than scheduled, to canvass the votes for president and vice president.

The other the audit transmission of election returns from the precincts electronically on the counting issue of previous manual elections.

Nograles' demand came amid a review of allegations from both national and local candidates and their supporters that the automated election system which delivered the bulk of the results within days of the polls was marked by fraud.

Nograles had specifically noted the flash or memory cards that were found to be defective just days before May 10 and which were supposedly completely replaced.

"We want to know if the flash cards were also subcontracted to the electronic voting can only be done through flash memory cards' switching. That's what we'll inquire today," he said.

Massive fraud

On his last term in the House, Nograles (1st he reserve of Davao City but lost.

In the upper chamber, former President Joseph Estrada is a number of Present ng Masang Pilipino whose standard bearer, former President Joseph Estrada, has complained of massive, allegedly automated, fraud.

Three other presidential candidates, Jamby Madrigal, Eduardo Pedrosa and JC delos Reyes, have appeared in a press conference crying foul fraud.

As of yesterday, front-runner Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III had a 5.3-million vote lead over his closest rival, Estrada, and he is set to receive the biggest mandate of all Philippine presidents since 1986.

The Comelec signed Smartmatic to a contract worth P7.2 billion in July last year with payment to be made in 13 installments and the final one to be paid after the May 10 election.

Smartmatic hired Ashtech of Taiwan to assemble the 81,000 PCOS machines and purchased the software technology from Dominion Voting Systems of Canada.

Nograles said Congress' canvass of the votes for president and vice president would start on May 28 and he expected it to wrap up by June 4. The new president and vice president will take their oath of office on June 30.

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FEDERAL LAND

With Corona snub, Aquino risks showdown with high court

From page A1

...until taking before he fled to Hawaii. Marcos, a stickler to legal tradition, took his oath from Chief Justice Ramon Aquino.

The prospects of a smooth transition from the outgoing administration of President Arroyo were shattered after she decided to appoint Corona without having to wait for her successor to appoint the new Chief Justice.

Mr. Aquino's appointment—one of her last acts in office—was highly provocative. She was carrying out a standard policy against her successor by creating conditions for a constitutional crisis involving the next president and the Supreme Court, which she had packed with her appointees.

Total court coup

With the retirements of Puno and the appointment of Corona, Mr. Arroyo's coup of the court becomes total.

There are no signs that a constitutional showdown can be averted in the first days of the new administration. Some Aquino security watch lackadaisies, despite the fact that Aquino had been elected president with a nine-row plurality based on election returns (Just 90 percent of the votes).

Aquino appears determined he would not take his oath before Gloria Corona, whose appointment has been questioned as a "midnight appointment."

"I do not want my own oath taking to be done before a questioned swearing," Aquino said. "There is no requirement (for a president) to take this oath before a Chief Justice. That is a primary tradition, not a requirement of law."

There is no hint that Aquino would take the suggestion that he could revoke the Corona appointment through an administrative order in the manner President Diosdado Macapagal swapped the dates that a botched appointments made by outgoing President Carlos Garcia a day before Macapagal took office on Dec. 30, 1961, in the celebrated "Midnight appointments" case that created a stormy outcry of the Macapagal administration.

The Supreme Court backed Macapagal's administrative order. The midnight appointment case marked one of the most tumultuous transitions in the two-party system before the martial law of President Marcos.

Fraught with risks

A revocation by Aquino of Mr. Arroyo's appointment is fraught with risks triggering a constitutional crisis raising fears a confrontation between the executive and the high court—a crisis he does not need at the start of his presidency.

The Arroyo-packed court found comfort in the congratulations recently Chief Justice Puno extended to Corona at the retirement ceremony at the Supreme Court.

Puno acknowledged Corona as the 23rd Chief Justice. Some legal circles interpreted this acknowledgment as a gesture of approval of the controversial Arroyo appointment.

Some compromise proposals have been made by certain quarters calling on Corona to use his "better judgment" and not accept the appointment so as not to "create problems" for the next administration.

This proposal came from former President Fidel Ramos, who said, "Although there are no legal barriers, there's still such a thing as ethics in accepting in any position. And if it's clouded by the passage of a problem for the future administration, and this is in the hands of the Chief Justice appointed by his enemy, then he himself can use his better judgment because there's such a thing as accepting and not accepting (the post)."

Toxic legacy

Ramos explained that the Corona appointment was "complicated" in the context of its propriety. "It might create a problem for the next administration," he said. "It might even end in the court's credibility."

Whether Corona would heed this counsel from his friends, when sworn in as the Chief Justice involving suspension of powers that have the next administration in a presidential dispute over the Supreme Court's Supervision president have never been confronted by this conflict in the event.

It is made more complex by the fact that such conflict involves a court whose independence has been undermined because of its composition. Such a confrontation is more of a test for the court.

For the first time in the history of the court, it is fully packed by Arroyo appointees. This heralds a stormy start for the Aquino presidency if the Aquino backlash in one of the few clean and peaceful elections we have held.

The outgoing President, who is responsible for this last-hour controversy, has left as a toxic and divisive legacy by moving institutions to the path of destruction.

Barangay chair needs 'barong' for new role

From page A1

runner Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III proceeds with the plan to take his oath before a Tarlac barangay captain, he will most likely select Sebastian Aguinaldo, the head of barangay Central 1 in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac City, where Aquino is a registered voter.

Aguinaldo said he was ready to swear in Aquino, the second Tarlaqueño president, as soon as it becomes official. But he had one problem—he had no barong Tagalog.

"We are excited. I am excited. It is a big honor for us if Noynoy will really take his oath here and before a village chief," Aguinaldo, 45, told the business tycoon-turned-politician.

Aguino is the son of late President Corazon Aquino, a member of the Cojuangco clan that owns the more than 6,000-hectare sugar estate in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac.

Following tradition, Philippine presidents were sworn in by the Chief Justice. But Aquino appeared not keen on taking his oath of office before incoming Chief Justice Renato Corona, a "midnight" appointee of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Massive clean-up

Reached by phone yesterday, Tarlac City Mayor Genaro Mendoza said he had not received official word that Aquino would take his oath before a barangay captain in the city.

While Aquino had not specified which barangay captain would administer the oath, Mendoza and village officials thought it could be Aguas since it was in Hacienda Luisita where Aquino voted on May 10.

It was not known if Aquino's camp had coordinated with Gov. Victoria Yap or his spokesperson, Archie Cabuay, as they were not answering their mobile numbers yesterday.

Aguas said most of his constituents—more than 5,000 of them in Brgy. Sto. Cristo, Concepcion, Oliveros, Lole and Dayap near the sugar mill—were looking forward to hosting the historic event.

He said villagers were even planning to undertake massive cleanup drive.

What to wear!

Some residents, Aguas said, were already looking for something "decent" to wear for the occasion.

Aguas said, for himself, did not own a barong Tagalog, traditionally worn by men on important occasions.

"I often stand as a wedding sponsor so I just rent a [barong Tagalog] because if I don't, I would be wearing the same outfit over and over," said Aguas with a chuckle.

He said he would have a new barong Tagalog, not a faded one, to give respect to Noynoy and the occasion," he added.

Aguas said the seven council members of Central also did not have a barong Tagalog.

Aquino's humility

Aguas admires Aquino, whose humility is known throughout the sugar estate, which straddles Tarlac City and the towns of Concepcion and La Paz.

Farm workers and sugar mill employees of Central Azucarera de Tarlac (no. 1) in barangays spread wishes to see the people cry of the estate.

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On 7th day, PPCRV takes break

AFTER A WEEK OF non-stop counting of votes from all over the country, the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) took a day off yesterday with its electronic partner asset sweeping past the 90 percent mark.

PPCRV volunteers, however, continued a separate manual tabulation of election returns which will be compared with the Comelec's (Commission on Elections) official tabulation manual count at Dulalia.

"There is no tally today because the server is in charge of downloading the data from the servers took a break. So we just download data and upload it to the PPCRV display). And also, there's no Comelec sessions today," Clifford Sorita, PPCRV secretary general, told reporters.

Take a break

He said PPCRV's technicians from partner firm Cybersoft asked to take a break on Sunday after working straight since election day.

The PPCRV count was at 90.16 percent of results from 76,475 precincts as meanwhile.

Sorita said the next update would be released today.

Updates have been slow after an initial run-up in the first few days of the PPCRV count, increasing only by 0.81 percent from Friday's update to the last release Saturday night.

"Hopefully, we want to get a bigger shift (in figures)," Sorita said.

Nine percent of the total votes have yet to be counted.

Final 3 slots

Senatorial candidate nr. 13th to 15th place are still fighting for the final three slots. These include Sergio Osmeña III, re-elected Gov. Emi Lapid, Hedcris Gallaguio III, Rep. Francisco Ramiro, Wally Bacoro and Joey de Venecia.

Comelec's consolidated count was ahead of the PPCRV parallel tally as of Saturday. The poll body said winners of the last three senatorial slots will be known after their story on Page A21

On the manual tally, Sorita said 100,000's recording of printed election returns had reached close to 40 percent of the total. The accredited citizens' arm is expected to report as the Comelec any discrepancies it notes between the electronic results and the manually encoded numbers.

PPCRV has retrieved close to 80 percent of the printed election returns by volunteers from 6 quarantine

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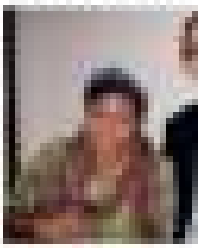

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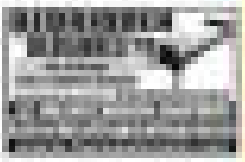

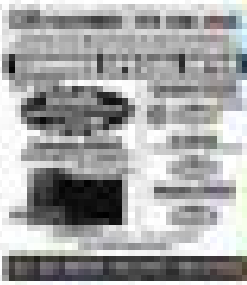

INQUIRER
OPINION

Prophet

THE COUNTRY'S 22ND CHIEF JUSTICE TURNS 70 today, and in accordance with a specific constitutional provision will retire from the judiciary. It is unfortunate, however, that Chief Justice Reynato Puno's last days in office have been stained by the controversy over the naming of his successor (a misfortune Puno is not entirely innocent of). In his 17 years on the Supreme Court, in the pivotal years of 2001 and in his three-and-a-half years as head of the judicial branch of government, Puno led an exemplary judge's life.

EDITORIAL

His legal reputation, signaled by his appointment to the Court as associate justice in 1995 (he was a young 53, but already with a decade's experience as appellate-level judge), was the sure hand, other judges emulated him. In 2000, after Joseph Estrada abandoned Malacañang, Puno wrote the eighty-reasoned *ponencia* that helped steady the ship of state. And as Chief Justice since 2006, he inaugurated an era of judicial activism that depended not so much on external factors but on the Court's inner dynamics, on the reinvention of its own rules of court.

In July 2007, on his initiative, the Supreme Court conducted an extraordinary summit on the astounding series of political killings and politically motivated disappearances that the Arroyo administration seemed run away to tolerate but—as the Alston Report later confirmed, for all the world to see—to be actually complicit in. This initiative was preceded by the designation of 99 regional trial courts as special courts for the resolution of extrajudicial killings; it was succeeded, in September 2007, with an entirely new legal weapon, the writ of amparo. The new writ, Puno said then, "will deny to authorities the easy defense of simple denial when they are sued to produce the victim before the courts, the bodies of victims of involuntary disappearances."

The brilliant use of the Supreme Court's constitutional prerogative to "promulgate rules concerning the protection and enforcement of constitutional rights, pleading, practice, and procedure in all courts" resulted in other breakthroughs, including the writ of habeas data, a legal remedy which allows petitioners to force the authorities to provide access to official information to help solve killings or enforced disappearances; and the freshly minted writ of kalikasan, which may be filed by any party "whose constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is violated or threatened with violation."

It is in these new rules that Puno's role as biblical prophet—a voice thundering against injustice and abuse—is heard most clearly.

The cases decided under his watch form a mixed record. In his valedictory speech last Friday, Puno paid special tribute to two cases decided during his term: *Pascual* ruling by unanimous vote). One of the many he could have highlighted the Manila Bay decision, which binds government agencies even tighter to their environmental responsibilities, and the Mamaspradises of Agreement on ancestral domain decision, which in his view prevented the dismemberment of the Republic. These are true landmarks, but in the last couple of years they have found themselves surrounded by the rulers of egregious rulings, such as the ones broadening executive privilege and the exceptions to midnight appointments.

Unfortunately for all the hosts of judicial activists in his first three years as chief (as activists he defended most vigorously and most eloquently in the matter of the extrajudicial killings), Puno fell strangely silent in his last months in office on the most controversial issue facing the Court: the power of the President to appoint a Chief Justice despite the specific constitutional provision on midnight appointments.

We would have wanted to hear from him on the sewing issue—sewing not because it was a complicated case requiring sophisticated interpretation (it centers on yet another specific constitutional provision), but because it involved greed, ambition, fear, the capacity for rationalization and other external aspects of human nature.

We can only hope that, in history's long perspective, Puno, the judge's judge, will be measured not by his belated silence, but by the thunder and lightning of his many important decisions over a quarter-century in the judiciary.

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Noynoy faces first midnight contract

PRESIDENT-ELECT BENIGNO AQUINO III HAS an agenda: midnight appointments, including that of the Chief Justice, and not that he would have the reason really the last-minute appointments made by President Macapagal-Arroyo as GMA's father, President Diosdado Macapagal, did with the midnight appointments of his predecessor, President Carlos P. Garcia. I assume he would do the same thing to midnight contract. Here is the first case which, if not nipped in the bud, would mean the loss of half a billion pesos of the people's money.

This is already the last two minutes of the present administration, but a salad still wants to push through such a last-minute deal for the construction of the P1.56 billion Pangkor Airport Project in Bohol, a project of the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA). To do this, the Prequalification, Bidding and Awards Committee (PBAC) wants to disqualify the lowest bidder to be able to award the contract to the highest, but lowest, bidder.

The project is the site development for the Panglao Airport. Nine bids were received by MIAA. The lowest bid was P668 million; three bids declared at P1.5 billion, just a shade lower than the government estimate.

In spite of the enormous savings of P676 million, and after the lapse of more than three months, and the expiration of the prescribed non-extendible 30-day post-qualification period, MIAA did not award to the lowest bidder. MIAA wants an award is not to the lowest bidder but to any of the highest bidders, even if this is grossly disadvantageous to the government. It recently disqualified the lowest bidder for substantial and baseless reasons and is now poised to award the contract at an excessive price to a non-complying contractor who originally topped the bidding.

Several bidders, claiming the blessings of top government officials, conspired with MIAA officials to rig the bidding. The chattering of the bids near the government estimate, and the sudden withdrawal of seven bidders, are evidence of collusion. Instead of dismissing their bids from the government estimate to improve their chances of winning, which is expected in a truly competitive bidding, these bidders almost matched the government estimate.

Curiously, MIAA, which is duty bound to ensure competition and transparency in public bidding, has neither investigated nor summoned the bidders.

Instead of declaring them non-complying, MIAA turned a blind eye, not only to the rigging, but also to the deficiencies of the three highest bidders. These bidders submitted non-government contracts that are not similar to Panglao, and that are not substantiated by valid copies of BIR-stamped "received" withholding income taxes, to satisfy the eligibility requirement of having completed a similar project costing at least half of that of Panglao. They should have been disqualified outright.

Moreover, the colluding bidders included bidders who are tainted with corruption, such as the contractor for the completed Macapagal Boulevard in Pasay, another contractor that was recently suspended by the Build Bind, as are but still rigging and still another accused of corrupting all the major public works contracts in Bicol and linked to the killing of publicity whistle blower Bay Mayor.

On the other hand, the lowest bidder is the most qualified, if not the only qualified bidder. Among the past projects are two large site development projects similar to Panglao. It is the only bidder who has proven experience in the construction works of an international airport. The tender in Panglao airport, containing principally of massive earth moving and extensive drainage works, are almost identical to the overall drainage system (ODS) that it satisfactorily built for MIAA.

This lowest bidder won the bidding fair and square. It submitted the most advantageous bid and the lowest price for the project, saving the government P672 million in taxpayers' money in the process.

But instead of rewarding over a truly competitive and tremendously advantageous bid, MIAA is shamelessly looking for excuses to disqualify the lowest bidder so that the contract can be awarded to the highest but favored bidder.

The flaw cited, three months, it has been diligently combing the records to look for the misstep: flaw in the lowest bid. But it has neither interest nor time to investigate the rigging of the bidding. It has condemned the lowest bidder for the flimsiest reasons. Not found nothing wrong with bidders who brazenly commit the biggest crime of all against public bidding: the fixing of the bid and the fixing of the price of the contract, to the disadvantage of the people.

This lowest bidder does not want the contract to be awarded to the highest bidder.

He just wants the new administration to look at it and award it to the most deserving. Some outgoing officials probably want to award the contract now to provide for their future.

Noynoy, however, Aquino should not allow this midnight contract to go through.

* * *

It is a sad reflection on the quality of our voters that the 12 senators they voted for were mediocrities and co-senators-in-waiting or a remarkably unedifying four movie actors: Bong Revilla, Jinggoy Estrada, Tito Sotto and, however, Lito Lapid, a member of the Senate committee on silence.

Nine of the senators (Revilla, Estrada, Marcos, Defensor-Santiago, Pimentel, Villar, Juan Ponce Enrile, Pia Cayetano, Bongbong Marcos, Ralph Recto and Sotto) were proclaimed the other day. Jorge Ejercito Estrada, Lapid and Teofisto Guingona III are in the 10th to 12th positions. Edu Manzano-Ramayrel is in 13th position, with Rolly Biazon and Jerry the Victorio III in the 14th and 15th slots. Gene Rilo or any of the other candidates will be able to overtake Lapid.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Quite another story

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LIKE WITH MOST OF THE STORIES JAMES RAY Tuttle Story: Hyatt 10 vs. Ramsay-mish Inc." My impression was that the people in spoke with were preserving testimonies and were already starting to rewrite history. What's the use of those two buttons in the Aquino campaign squabbling makes for a riveting headline, there is another deeper, truer and ultimately more exciting one.

For story suggests two things. One is that the rift in the Aquino camp was between a group associated with whom Hyatt 10 and a group associated with conservatism, or indeed with conservatism (Ramsay-mish Inc.), which birthed the Noy-Noy campaign. Two is that the Noy-Noy of the campaign, or the betrayal of the dream, consisted of the pushing of blue buttons. Neither is true.

But first off, let me be clear about how I know these things.

I knew those things because I kept track of those things. I was never uncomfortable taking an active interest in the Aquino campaign while having with media not just because I urged Noynoy to run but because I never saw myself as participating in a very partisan way in an election. I saw myself as participating in a very partisan way in a project to protect and preserve democracy. That was the project of ending nine years of misrule, or indeed illegitimate rule, and ushering in the hope or possibility of a better world. From the start I kept saying that Noynoy was more than an ordinary candidate—in our context from out of the blue to get the nomination that he did to an ordinary election—and this was more than an ordinary election: his mandate was not to win for himself the presidency but to win for the people their liberty.

From the start I kept saying that this was an Edsa-masquerading as an election, which was plainly not in the financial possession that seventy-year Cory to her final resting place, which guaranteed Noynoy more than any party-system to decide the standard-bearer, the right, honor and duty to lead us to the promised land. Incidentally it had to do with becoming president. Till the end, I kept saying this was an Edsa-masquerading as an election, which was proven by the poll-shaming to the democratic public schools even as its origins reached upon the earth, as they roused during Cory's funeral even as a growing dyin to fall in sun upon the earth.

The rift was never between the Ramsay-mish Inc. and the Hyatt 10. From the start, the rift was between the reformist volunteer groups and the rogue political party.

The political party went beyond the Liberal Party. It consisted of one, the Liberal Party itself, represented by Mar Roxas and Butch Abad, has been before Cory died and Noynoy became the presidential heir hastily organizing the "Mar for President" campaign and getting nowhere. Two, the "Team Ex," represented by Gene Padilla and Dinky Soliman, last seen the eve before Cory asked Gibo to resign in the wake of "Hello Garci" campaign belatedly in support of GMA "If We Hold On Together," in turn of "Bang around the room: A pudential of pastry: Adres! Adres! We all fall down!" Then too, showing a horrendous sense of entitlement instead of a shameful sense of contrition, were last seen before Cory died and Noynoy became the presidential heir hastily organizing the "Mar for President" campaign and getting nowhere. Three, "The Firm," represented by Nonong Cruz, last seen before Cory died and Noynoy became the presidential heir hastily organizing the "Mar for President" campaign and getting nowhere.

So way to tell these people represented certain, These groups merely went from hastily organizing the "Mar for President" campaign to hastily organizing the "Noynoy for President" campaign. But not nowhere hastily organizing the "Noynoy for President" campaign. It was under their auspices that the hastily put-together "Mar for President" campaign was transformed into the hastily put-together

A breach of the mandate

COMMENTARY

Prof. H. Harry L. Roque Jr.

What happens when the ultimate defender of the Constitution is itself in breach of its own mandate? Should it be be allowed a monopoly in upholding constitutional supremacy?

PRESUMPTIVE PRESIDENT-ELECT NOYNOY Aquino has been emphatic. He will not recognize an Arroyo-appointed chief justice. Aquino supporters have made this a cross-battle against him.

Can the presumptive Chief Executive ignore an issue that has been ruled upon by the highest court of the land? Who elects can the would-be unimpeachable office-by-virtue-of-the-constitution. Why? Under our scheme of government, the judiciary is a co-equal branch of government and ignoring an Arroyo-appointed chief justice would be equivalent to an infringement of judicial power.

It must, however, that the real issue is what happens when the ultimate defender of the Constitution is itself in breach of its own mandate. Under that circumstance, should it be allowed a monopoly in upholding constitutional supremacy?

The Supreme Court set aside the principle of stare decisis when it overturned Valenzuela, an earlier decision that ruled that the midnight ban on appointments covers the judiciary, without distinguishing circumstances. It did this purportedly on the basis of constitutional construction. The language is, however, clear. Section 15, Article VII of the Constitution is so clear that it precludes the need for statutory action. "Section 15. Two months immediately before the next presidential election and up to the end of his term, a President or Acting President shall not make appointments, except temporary appointments to executive positions when urgent necessities occur and protection public service or interest public safety."

The Constitution is written for the benefit of ordinary persons and not just magistrates. Where the fundamental law provides for a prohibition with specificity, there is no room for interpretation or equity, fundamentally prohibited. This includes appointments to the judiciary. The COMELEC decision in De Castro versus Judicial Bar Council revokes alleged intent as mentioned by then Commissioner Florenz Regalado during the proceedings of the Constitutional Commission. He however did not indicate where he derived this alleged intent aside from personal recollection. In contrast, the bare deliberating opinion of Justice Cecilia Cuepo-Morales specifically quoted then Commissioner Melquiades Prado Salas in the proceedings of the Constitutional Commission. Section 15 of article VII covers appointments to the judiciary.

If what the majority of the justices did was the correct way of pursuing intent, I shudder to think what will happen to the separation of powers the drafters of the Constitution are no longer trusted. That may stress, following the technique of the majority, an eventual impossibility to prove constitutional intent to the future.

The issue is not the jurisprudence but the breach of the mandate. The fact that the Court is referred to as "Supreme" is not a guarantee that it is infallible and will never obliterate its constitutional mandate. This happened in our recent history not two occasions: in Javellana when the Marcos-appointed Court sought refuge in the political question doctrine and abdicated its all-important tasks as guardian of constitutional supremacy, and in Aquino, which eventually invented People Power I.

The presumptive president-elect must keep his promise not to recognize the legitimacy of an Arroyo-anointed chief justice. He has reasons. First, he must honor the mandate of the sovereign people whom they ratified the 1987 Constitution. Second, this has become a political issue already decided by the people where they gave the presumptive president-elect an overwhelming mandate.

Even the majority of the members of the high court believe that their college can be etched in stone without any political subtext? I submit that the Court's duty is to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution so that despots may be prevented from entrenching themselves in institutional law to suit their personal and selfish interests. It should, however, not be interpreted to thwart the very intent of the people who gave their mandate to the Constitution. And certainly, judicial power cannot and should not be used to thwart the people will as the Court has done with now Chief Justice Renato Aquino in their trade based on a promise not to recognize the legitimacy of an acting midnight appointee.

Prof. H. Harry L. Roque Jr. will soon go on sabbatical leave to pursue a master's in Constitutional Law and Political Science and Government at the U.P. College of Law and will also begin as professor from the Philippine Judicial Academy in session over De Castro vs. JBC. He starts having other law professors to do the same.

Vestiges of Ampatuan handiwork?

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montealegre II

BY SOMEONE SMALL REINDEER ANONYMOUS upon request. Even since the payment of the last pension to their former drillers, Maguindanao remains a hotspot. Dredging information shall certainly place people in peril, my source included. The Ampatuans may be in jail. Here under of weapons and overlords of cross-fashioned, but their secrecy remains intact. It should not constitute to their ill alleged suspicious operations continued to lay Maguindanao to reparation as the election factory of the Philippines.

I heard this account history for the simple reason that we had thought we now are obviously in the age of automation. But not quite. As I said, the Ampatuan men be in jail. Yet it would be foolish to think that the days of lawlessness are no more. Money generates clout.

On the eve of the May 10 elections, there were heaped into a remote school house somewhere in Maguindanao where a PCOS machine was being tested and guarded ready for the next day's coming. I shall not attempt to name the particular town. Its fate and not knowing it for the reason past flesh itself. They repeat was very simple. They resisted the indelible ink. My source grew as in the request out of terror.

Their reasoning, a single property fraid of voters around. They came from somewhere else, not from the hunt to where the little schoolhouse was set around it to register at more places to Maguindanao, the hunt itself was entirely inhabited. The voters proceeded to vote. By 10 o'clock that morning, the entire property had was done. Voting was completed. No more voters came for the rest of the day.

By the time the election returns were printed, any voters were shocked to note that—lo and behold—40.00 voters were recorded to have voted. One property, of course, cannot load 800 passengers. This was a phone precinct. It is easy to deduce what the request for indelible ink was for.

Who stood to gain from that display-turned? Toto Mangudadatu was in that election to a load of about 12,000 votes. But we know that the Mangudadatu influence is no comparison to that of the Ampatuans. His main opponent, Datu Sinsuat, was however, supported by the Ampatuans. The candidate for vice governor was—surprise—Andal Ampatuan Jr.

It is possible that the Ampatuans fought both and still in this district, knowing the rules unprecedently fixed in a land reform. They have to do is better would the Maguindanao Massacre has generated upon their family. Toto Mangudadatu was poised to win. But his load in the family is a small one. Perhaps that is the result of impatience opponents. Despite the factor they are now accused of having perpetrated, the family house cannot afford to be outsided his bet. And so tried to win they did. I may be wrong, but this is my personal appreciation of the indelible ink issues.

If a prominent to celebrate automated elections. Note it was openly and that in itself was already historical, so the historical in fact. Having the results saved on automated media—that same night was incredible for a country that had a bad reputation for being a laggard in counting votes.

But obviously we now know that there are many aspects of our election manipulations that the PCOS machine cannot cover.

One practice that still persist is vote buying. In my city the winning candidate was said to have distributed a minimum of P300 to a maximum of P1,000. I know because a neighbor received this largesse. Although tackling badly in the surveys for the 12th time in his political career, the candidate won by city margin by an incredibly acquiring kind of a more thousand votes. The losing opponent was highly popular in the surveys. Vote buying seemed to have made sure that he lost even by just a small margin.

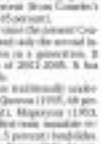
Apparently, the cheating operation did not require millions of votes to be manufactured. Election peripherals were found to have been dumped in the city's dumpsite. These consisted of used compact flash cards and back-up cards (used there supposed to be tossed over to Comelec and Smartmatic in Manila?) as well as printed thermal rolls.

Let me say it again. It is premature to celebrate automated election. I am very sure that given the cunning abilities of our politicians, the next one three years from now will certainly be automated cheating. Spend yes, but spend in computerizing padded numbers. In fact, automated cheating has already begun.

This is not precinctism. Dire desire for the common good except debate that every inch and centimeter of election cheating must be addressed if this country is to move on. Our election woes did not end with the PCOS machine. We are still a nation of cheats. Only this time, we have become hitech cheats. How's that for the national character?

Comments to montealegre_antonio@yahoo.com.ph

The mandate



THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

BACK BOARDS, 2010. SEE RAUL T. GONZALEZ, JR. filed a bill proposing a "marginal" constitutional amendment to permit one-off elections for the post abroad three months after the May 10 polls if no candidate achieved 50 percent. I've long been a proponent of one-off elections on a more distance bill, although I'm willing to go back to the old two-party system (and with the Indonesian experience in mind).

Raul Gonzalez's bill bears taken seriously this country would be granting up for a downpour between Benigno Aquino III and Joseph Ejercito Estrada, with the real result being a president this country would know was supported by at least fifty-half of the electorate.

But Gonzalez Jr. filed his bill when the Presidency was a contest among the Villarosas and Nograles families for running through Cluster change. The run in order to initiate a one-party parliamentary rule and thereby save the President and his people from ever having to bother with public opinion in national terms.

The effect would certainly be small. Impact of last year, when it was quietly dropped, coinciding with the President's return from her visit to Beach Obama in Pittsburgh. The proposal for one-off elections was never seriously considered as the heart of the House's priorities was to facilitate a snap election, which was why Speaker Prospero Nograles' other Cory Aquino stunt and the night mare scenario of a second Aquino presidency not have). But until January of this year, though, did the Charter change attempt officially go belly up.

We should never forget the desire of the administration to change the rules of the game to guarantee its campaign to postpone the May 10 elections. Its brinksmanship failed even when it tried to enlist the Catholic Archbishop of Manila in an effort to fend off any image of the rules in dangerous game involved. It seems like Imelda has no space one how the business is now to be in charge of the campaign of Aquino's campaign (recall Estrada's and Villanueva's supporting the postponement proposal).

But the writing was on the wall, the survey showed in the public knew it was in store. The Comelec could not fail to note that there no many signs of our election manipulations that the PCOS machine cannot cover.

One practice that still persist is vote buying. In my city the winning candidate was said to have distributed a minimum of P300 to a maximum of P1,000. I know because a neighbor received this largesse. Although tackling badly in the surveys for the 12th time in his political career, the candidate won by city margin by an incredibly acquiring kind of a more thousand votes. The losing opponent was highly popular in the surveys. Vote buying seemed to have made sure that he lost even by just a small margin.

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Comments to montealegre_antonio@yahoo.com.ph

'Wen, Manong!'

REVEILLE

Alexander J. Lardizabal

FIRST OF ALL ANOTHER EPISODE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS.

Last Friday I dropped in at the national consultation on the implementing rules and regulations (IRRs) for the new Senior Citizens Act, RA 9994. The meeting participated to by members of several government agencies, non-government organizations as well as business establishments was conducted at the DSWD auditorium in Quezon City.

In my comments during the open forum with Social Welfare Undersecretary Alicia R. Bala of the Policy and Programs Group, I expressed appreciation that of the promulgation of the IRRs could be overtaken by the things in administration in June 30. It is time to bypass it would cause further delay in the implementation of the new law, a delay which would be difficult for senior citizens to understand and appreciate.

As I mentioned last Monday, we were looking at June 15 or earlier as the deadline for the IRRs. Undersecretary Bala informed me that the deadline, the IRRs will be in place before June 30, which means that the present crop of Cabinet officials would have finalized and affixed their signatures to the IRRs before leaving office. This is good news and I thank Undersecretary Bala for sharing with me this information which should put to rest the concerns of our senior citizens as well as the elderly in our communities.

The other issue that I brought up which I entrusted to Undersecretary Bala had to do with the rebates mechanism or the sharing of burden of discounts among providers, manufacturers and distributors. The amount of the senior citizens must not be held hostage to the possible difficulties in establishing these burden-sharing mechanisms.

On Wednesday "Friends of Manong Mike" will pay tribute to one of the pillars of the Philippine public television industry, a man who for many years has inspired generations of PR practitioners in the country with his energy, his zest and his unyielding commitment to professionalism.

The gathering dubbed "Mike, Manong" (which basically means, "Sir, sir.") will honor Maximiano J. Ledesma Jr., we remain and will remain Mike Ledesma. Born to Atty. Ledesma for the last 50 years has worked dutifully and with dedication in the vineyard of public relations. The affair will be held at the Peninsula Hotel from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Several weeks ago, Mike suffered a double loss. First his wife Fe succumbed after a long battle with cancer. This was followed a few days later by his granddaughter Alexis, one of the twin daughters of Mike's son, also losing her own to a debilitating fight with leukemia. He was in Vancouver when word reached us of the tragedy.

Dino Ebdalin, or "Benny" to his teammates, exemplifies the ingredients that make of effective litigator, or perhaps more accurately, the rewards of industry, frugality and sobriety that our office accords well. Ebdalin, who have achieved success in the face of difficulties and obstacles that would have thrown aspiring most other individuals.

In 1993, after graduating from the Ateneo Sister High School, MAU joined the Philippine Herald as a newsstand jaunter, hoping to save money for a college education in his spare time he learned how to use the typewriter and negotiate with the newsstand owners. Ebdalin, who was then the editorial desk, developing much of the actual that took place among the reporters and editors. After a while he became a proofreader and was later promoted to reporter with the military as his beat.

One of the landmark cases on the confidentiality of news sources involved Mar. He refused to reveal the source of a news story on a murder case about then Garden Secretary Oscar Orbos. Mar was cited in contempt by the trial court for not later released on his own recognizance by the Supreme Court. Because of this case, changes were made in the law concerning confidentiality of news sources. Today Mar has provided greater protection for persons in protecting their sources of information.

After 10 years with the newspaper Mar decided to try his hand at public relations, starting as a special assistant to Secretary Gemilo Bautista of the Department of Economy and Industry. This would be followed by a stint with the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) office in Bangkok. Upon returning home he joined the Bogard Company as a media relations officer.

In 1971 he moved to Citibank N.A. where he retired as senior consultant / public affairs director after close to 20 years with the company. He still keeps busy as a consultant to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, as well as the Association of Development Financial Institutions in Asia and the Pacific.

Addie from his work with the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, where he is currently a member executive of the National Executive Board, perhaps Mar's most famous yarn by far is to Addie Philippines may have provided him with one of the great satisfactions of his life.

One of the most prized deed counties a child can ever have is a right by a palm. This is a condition where a split or opening occurs in the roof of the mouth. Mar, owned at president of Operation Smile Philippines, has been instrumental in the series to obtain a better chance in life. Many cleft lips may seem like no big deal but for those without the resources for an operation it could mean almost a mistake for them. And Mar through his work with Smile made dreams come true for many children.

Mar is a recipient of the Ang Gawad Dangal Pinoy, the highest award for volunteerism from the Public Relations Society of the Philippines. The Boy Scouts of the Philippines has also honored on him its top award, the Gold Tenderfoot, and from the Boy Scouts of Japan, the Millennium Boy Shidei award was given for his work in the field of public relations.

Hits to the list of Pi and Alexis:

"The terrible consequence [of the rains last] is a warning belief to the purpose of God. I am not persuaded that it is right to take the life of that girl whose only desire is to see her father for singing to make people happy. I went to a point a few days ago to seek enlightenment. I expressed the desire to see Bienvenido in my life so that I would be reassured by the Holy Spirit and the Word. The point looked at me it taught me the eye and said, 'Have you asked yourself who you were here?' I am beginning to understand as I must understand for my own sake. But it may take time for me to accept and to adjust to the loss of Mom and Alexis. I will miss them so much as they were very much a part of my life. I must now find a new meaning for my own existence because all that has been shattered by their death."

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Celebrity endorsers failed

THE HOUSE OF MANNY VILLAR TELLS US that endorsements from big-time celebrities can go lowdown.

Millions of Filipinos were not swayed by the famous purveyor of instant gratification, Willie Revillame, who initiated all kinds of schmaltz and guilt-trips from the masses, who gives away cash by the thousands at the flick of his fingers, and pounder-bedamned-girth to skimpy get-ups.

A wizard of mass emotions, Revillame would use endearment why some decent conscientious cases has pooling-in-many half-naked "heroines" girls who earned Villar's sullen-lass hairstyles' stones. When the most honest and worldwide-and the girls, did revelations think they were signaling support for Villar?

Display old, bearded, wrinkled and saggy, crooked fat anecdote about him and Manny growing up in Tondo and that our children's future would be in better hands with Villar. When Dolphy sole something on TV, we all know he has been posting money, no-appearance for Villar only affirmed the general perception that the Nacionalista Party presidential candidate was spending billions of pesos to get himself elected. Beyond snobbishness and humanity into the presidency realm. It's a subtle way of telling voting cohort candidates like Erap Pwe ng and de la Rosa, who were worthy candidates but didn't have the money to burn.

Manny Pacquiao didn't need Villar's money. But he wanted the MO's support. His endorsements of Villar were not necessary. But it was a big puzzle for us why Pacquiao, who elevated the whole nation when he fights in the ring, didn't realize as it was for Villar. Something went wrong. Methinks we're sending a clear message as Pacquiao keeps pounding his opponent with whom he comes to choosing our president.

Isaiah Chevalier, she with the short-cut hair, multilingual singing voice and scintillating acting skills, effortlessly sells shampoo on TV but failed when she sold our Lotto Legends for vice presidency.

Silent celebrities sell politicians or mediocrities, where lies the difference? Choosing a candidate is not an easy business. But country is a mess. We have to think and discern, we have to use our own mind, our somebody else's. This fooling can action all classes of people during the 2010 election. The last one Revillame, Dolphy, Pacquiao and Isaiah failed to make a big difference in Villar's and together campaigns' events that Filipino voters today can distinguish the difference between quality and gimmickry and by this, we Filipinos have advanced in 2010 to no much higher in political maturity.

—GUMERSINDO CARANTES,
MD, Imbesibo,
Iponan Alabang, Mandaluyong City

Stunted state of S&T

THIS IS A REACTION TO MIGUEL LUIS contemporary called "Aghan" Ilustrado, 5/5/10, in which he said that the country's low level of science and math achievement is the reason we are unable to develop and maintain a significant industrial base.

Yes, what he exactly says is correct.

First, the point He, he elaborated it a recently established party list which happens to have the same name as our group. It is an entity different from our organization, Aghan Distributor ng Impormasyon ng Aghan at Teknolohiya para sa Sambayanan). Founded in 1998, ours is a volunteer organization of science and technology (S&T) professionals advocating the cultivation of S&T for the benefit of the Filipino people. We have been in the news for our advocacy and other contributions, such as the one we helped compose the science of the Mendiola school.

Second, we wish to comment on Luis's view on the relationship between S&T and industrialization. We agree that the problem of underdevelopment in science and much should be understood, but we believe that its resolution will not necessarily lead to the development of an industrial base.

Once a country decides to industrialize, advances in S&T (which call for higher funding for research and education) will follow. It does not work the other way around, as Luis implied. Sadly, no administration, past or present, has made any serious effort to lead the country toward genuine industrialization...one that is primarily oriented toward meeting local needs (e.g., power, pharmaceuticals, steel) through the establishment of basic, state-owned and medium-to-light industries that will enable the country to build a self-reliant, stable and progressive economy that is also independent politically.

Right now, basic industries are practically nil. Government-owned industries are being privatized. To provide for our needs, the government imports goods. To provide jobs, it invites foreign-owned companies like mining firms (to extract our resources) and service-oriented, semi-industrial "business" call-centers.

Contrary to what Luis said, this country does not lack S&T professionals to manage industries. In fact, we have a lot of professionals who are one of S&T-related jobs simply due to the lack of industries that can absorb them. The brain drain continues, the few science professionals remaining in the country are either working in universities or are employed in support research, marketing or quality assurance.

We believe that the lack of government resolve to implement genuine industrialization and agrarian reform...two inseparable ingredients for progress—is to blame for the stunted state of our S&T. In the absence of a real industrialization program, even a cocktail mentality on the budget of the Department of Science and Technology will be of little help to revitalizing industries, in promoting employment opportunities for college grads and in effecting national progress.

—LEONARDO UMALI,
public information officer, Aghan,
info@aghan.org

PCGG's 'hulidap' style

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON Good Government has always signed that while full recovery of the ill-gotten assets of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos would be ideal, the agency has no make compromises or bartrade-off to recover. (Inquirer, 5/1/10)

The PCGG uses a "hulidap" modus operandi—like a police officer who, after catching a snatcher with a stolen wallet containing P500, suggests a "compromise agreement" under which the snatcher would evade hail of the P500 and the wallet's owner would get back the other half. The cop then lets go of the criminal. But we don't know if the cop had asked a certain amount or "hati" (share) from the snatcher.

I think the next president should issue a statement that his administration will not bargain or make compromise agreements on that basis or the forfeitures involved should be watched all the more by us.

—EDGAR C. ALEJALA,
Bayang Lipunan Condominium, Tapuy City

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BDO

Thai Red Shirts seek talks

From page A1

one response was that no conditions should be attached to negotiations.

"If they really want to talk, they should not act on fifteen like asking us to withdraw troops," said foreign ministry spokesman, the prime minister's secretary-general.

"It's a positive sign but if there is going to be a talk, there has to be some detail. But they cannot make demands if they want to negotiate," he said.

Curfew plan junked

The imposition of a curfew, which would have been a costly in a city known for raucous nightlife, had been considered by the government as troops fired live rounds to disperse protesters armed with petrol bombs, rocks, homemade rockets, grenades and guns.

"We cannot retreat now," Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said in a televised statement.

The Sunday fighting was striking close to the Ban Kai area of Soi 5, a major entry to the business district. Troops and snipers fired warning guns as protesters hurled petrol bombs and launched rockets off barricades erected there to camouflage themselves.

One protester was shot in the head by a sniper; the cameraman, as clashes intensified, a paramedic was treated at troops, who responded with gunfire that scattered the photographers into nearby offices, the reporters said.

The protesters had been shouting the resignation of the British-born, Oxford-educated officials, whom their accuse of colluding with Thailand's royalist elite and meddling with the military to bring down previous elected governments.

Women, kids trickle out

"I will stay here. We will not flee," Jaruwan Prempan, a protest leader, told supporters in their 33-square-kilometer encampment where at least 3,000 Red Shirts remained, including women and children, barricaded behind walls of tires, poles and corrugated iron.

Some women, children and the elderly are trickling into a makeshift Buddhist temple for safety. The government is working cooperation with protest leaders to dispatch Red Cross workers and other human rights volunteers to persuade people to leave.

Analysts and diplomats said the military appeared to have underestimated the resolve of thousands of protesters hunkered down in defiance of military bombs and shooting aside for six weeks.

Thousands of protesters were running in a reputed area in the working-class Klong Toey area near the fighting on Rama IV. A new protest site would surely exacerbate obstacles to end the stalemate and resolve a crisis that has battered the economy.

Unrest may spread

"Unless the government cracks down and does so decisively, and that's simply not now going to be seeing fewer moving and possibly worse, possibly spreading out to other areas of Bangkok," said the diplomat who declined to be identified.

At Bangkok Internal Fire more an arrest, many residents erected archives or hoarded food and other supplies from grocery stores.

"My driver's hours have much longer this nightmare is go-

ANTIGOVERNMENT Red Shirts carry a man who was shot in the head during clashes with soldiers on Rama IV Road in Bangkok. AP PHOTO

ing to last and how far it will spread," said Pranee Srisawan, a Bangkok resident staying in fear at a supermarket. "I am thinking maybe after rest of the week."

Witnesses said the bloodshed had been largely one-sided, as troops armed with automatic rifles easily dodged projectiles and opened fire with accurate weapons. Some protesters have been killed by snipers positioned on the tops of office towers.

Soldiers may closer to protesters came within 30 meters of Amy Isaa, said Amy spokesperson Jaruwan Kaewkamnerd. He added more soldiers were needed to establish control.

No soldier has been identified in the official tolls that show 25 people killed and 219 wounded. Two more medical workers have been killed. Five journalists have been shot, though one was not wounded because the bullet deflected off his flak jacket.

Near Victory Monument, where clashes took place on Saturday, a young man watching the shoot was shot in the head by a sniper's bullet, according to a Reuters witness. The man did not appear to be a protester.

Terrorism charges

Many protest leaders now face terrorism charges. But many a mysterious penalty of death, raising the stakes in a two-month crisis that has paralyzed parts of Bangkok, divided Southeast Asia's second-biggest economy and deterred investors.

The protesters, who have adopted red as a protest color and broadly support ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, set fire to vehicles and hurled rocks at troops who set up razor wire and shielded tools on Saturday in the business district.

The UN Embassy has offered to evacuate families and partners of its guest house staff based in Bangkok on a voluntary basis. The embassy urged tourists not to travel to Bangkok.

The government's strategy of starving protesters out of their encampment was showing signs of having an effect, supplies of food, water and fuel were starting to run thin as the Red Shirt delivery trucks were being blocked.

But the protesters said they still had enough to hold out for days.

Reuters

Across the NATION

300 PCOS men seek payment for work

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—ABOUT 300 TECHNICIANS of Smartmatic-TIM who have been hired by a Manila-based recruiter are frustrated that they have yet to receive their "reduced" salaries a week after the May 10 automated election.

A representative of the group said the bosses that they have yet to be given the approved contract for their work to monitoring the performance of the precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines in 343 clustered precincts in Catanduanes from May 6 to May 11.

The representative, who sought anonymity for fear of being reprimanded, said they were recruited by Hacwell International Services Corp. through Catanduanes Institute of Technology Foundation Inc. and Catanduanes Colleges, with whom (Hacwell) had signature contracts to supply manpower for the automated polls.

One school official who also requested anonymity said they had sought release of the payment for the technicians but got the cheek from Hacwell only on May 8.

The promised check, however, could only be encashed on June 4.

He confirmed that both schools signed contracts with Hacwell but they have not been given copies of the approved contracts until now.

The 343 technicians underwent one-day training in batches in March, when they were asked to sign the contracts.

Hacwell's provincial coordinator Judith Arcilla, a native of Siruagan, said the contracts would have to be studied to ease the applicants were hired by the firm.

They asked their Smartmatic-TIM supervisor about their compensation but the latter declined to comment, saying Smartmatic's only concern was the PCOS precincts.

The group said each technician is supposed to be given P8,000 salary for 10 days, with the period to include meetings and trainings. During the training, Hacwell gave free food and reimbursed their transportation expenses.

On April 30, during a training at Virac Beach Resort, the latter's supervisor said, during the release of the PCOS machines from Smartmatic-TIM to the technicians, the technicians received P800 from Hacwell, with the amount to be deducted from their salary.

But they later learned that their compensation would be reduced to just P4,500 for three days work, with even the multipurpose fund to be deducted.

Technicians assigned in far-flung places complained about the matter but were assured that they would be given the fund but as a matter of P1,000 each and not the P2,000 as promised.

During the May 6 voting and sealing of the PCOS machines at the precincts, Hacwell released P800 to each technician, with P500 to be deducted from their return and P400 as food allowance for reporting to the Smartmatic-TIM/Comelec control center.

Most reported at their precincts on May 8 and were promised additional allowances but no. Election Day only the Smartmatic-TIM and T-shirt were given to them.

While each of the 343 precincts were supposed to have one technician each, some of them had to handle five to seven precincts each when some of their colleagues refused to go back to work.

After the May 10 election, they complained to their municipal coordinator but the latter told them to contact Arcilla, who replied that their contracts and salaries and allowances were being processed.

The grumbling technicians recalled that their salaries and other allowances were promised to be released upon retrieval of the PCOS machines and that Smartmatic-TIM National Service Center vented them that they would be paid according to the contract and gave a tentative which they were supposed to contract. The website, however, non-office.

They were told by Arcilla to make a letter-request for additional allowance for technicians assigned to far-flung areas. On May 13, she advised them to list down expenses incurred from receipt to retrieval of the PCOS and asked for their ATM accounts to facilitate release of the money.

But they were later told the money could not be released for some reasons. Perseus Ellanon, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Kabilang Ako!

2010 CPH starts today

National Statistics Office

Today, May 17, marks the start of the 2010 Census of Population and Housing (2010 CPH) which will take an inventory of the total population and housing units in the country. All information gathered regarding household members and housing characteristics are CONFIDENTIAL.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) calls on all Filipino households to share their precious time for the census interview and provide accurate information. Stand up and be counted!

Magpabilang...

Magpa-Census...

...Pilipino!

Why do we need to participate in the 2010 CPH?

Statistics that will be derived from the 2010 CPH will have the following uses:

In Government:
- redistricting and apportionment of congressional seats;
- allocation of resources and revenues;
- creation of political and administrative units;
- formulation of policies and plans concerning populations; and
- formulation of programs relative to the delivery of basic services for health, education, and housing, among others.

In Business and Industry:
- determination of sites for establishing businesses;
- determination of consumer demands for various goods and services; and
- determination of supply of labor for the production of goods and services.

In Research and Academic Institutions:
- conduct of researches on population and other disciplines;
- study of population growth and distribution as basis in preparing projections; and
- serves as sample frame for household-based surveys.

Who will act as Census Interviewers?

Pursuant to RP 72, public school teachers shall be utilized for the 2010 CPH. To augment the manpower requirements of the census, the NSO shall also hire census interviewers. They will be provided with proper identification cards duly signed by the NSO Administrator.

How will the interview be conducted?

Census interviewers will gather the data through house-to-house visits and personal interview of the household head or any responsible member of the household. Institutional population living in institutional living quarters such as hospitals, sanitaria, penitentiaries, military camps, convents, seminaries, and others shall also be visited by the interviewers or their supervisors.

What is the assurance of the public that the information given to the census interviewer will not be used for other purposes?

Section 4 of Commonwealth Act No. 591 guarantees that any information obtained during the interview shall be held strictly confidential and must not be communicated to any other person except to accredited employees of the NSO.

Is there a penalty for refusing to give information or providing false information to census interviewers?

Section 3 of Commonwealth Act no. 591 provides penalty, upon conviction, to any person who unjustifiably refuses to provide answers in the census questionnaire, or to anybody who knowingly gives false or wrong information.

For more information, contact us:

NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE
P.O. Box 779, Manila, Philippines

Census Hotline: 713-2789

Email: CPS2010@census.gov.ph

Website: http://www.census.gov.ph

Support the 2010 CENSUS and BE COUNTED!

North Cotabato vice gov cries massive fraud

KIDAPAWAN CITY—NORTH Cotabato Vice Gov. Emmanuel Pifiol denounced what he claimed was massive fraud during Monday's balloting in the province, which led to his defeat in the gubernatorial race.

Pifiol got 199,202 votes compared to North Cotabato first District Rep. Jesulito Tabio-Mendoza's 226,966 votes.

On Friday, Pifiol led a rally, attended by hundreds of supporters, at the provincial capitol here.

During the rally, he said that vote-buying occurred in Pikit, Kabacan and Carmen towns.

There, more than 30,000 votes were in the first district, where Tabio-Mendoza hails.

Tabio-Mendoza could not be reached for comment about Pifiol's claims.

Pifiol, a known newbie, that he said was reportedly given to his poll watchers in Midsayap town, Pifiol said that is contained P10,000.

The money, he said, was intended for Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) in the said town, but was given to his poll watchers by mistake.

Pifiol also showed a copy of an election return (ER) from Kabacan City, which he said was fake.

He said the ER was given to the PEI by his poll watcher. The ER had an Comelec seal at the back and has the markings of Globasik, he said.

Pifiol said the "fake ER" had a paper similar to the ones used in receipts for credit card charges.

"This is the evidence that the recently concluded automated election were marred with irregularities," he said.

Pifiol said he and his brother, Reynaldo Jr., who also lost in his reelection bid for the second congressional district to Henry Cesario, had already filed an election protest.

He said they were urging the Comelec to nullify the proclamation of Tabio-Mendoza and other politicians involved in election fraud.

Other Pifiol family members, who lost in the May 10 elections included Pedrosmil, who ran in the municipal contest in Aleosan town and Pikit; who failed in his bid to become the vice mayor of Kidapawan City.

Elton and Joselito were elected mayors of the towns of Magpet and Mlang, respectively, while Gerardo, was elected Mlang councilor.

In Digos City, the timely brought gubernatorial race finally ended when reelectionist Gov. Douglas Cagas won per estimates.

Cagas won by 1,393 votes against former Rep. Claude Bautista, who got 139,927 votes.

Prior to his proclamation around 6 p.m. Friday, Cagas had called on his campaign to stage a protest rally to press the Comelec not to proclaiming him.

But Ribet Bacbacan, Comelec provincial supervisor, said no amount of people power can force her to proclaim Cagas.

She said since results from the remaining towns were canvassed, the winners would be proclaimed.

At that time, only the results from Malita town, Bautista's hometown, had not been canvassed.

Aside from Cagas, Antonio Lanuza was also proclaimed vice governor-elect. —Wilhelmer Magbuelas, Carla Agerman, Rolando Pizarro and Orlando Dilay, Inquirer Mindanao

PRECAUVIOUS SILENCE
The serene scene of the crater lake of Mt. Pinatubo belies the constantly changing landscape as ever-risks from the unstable caldera walls echo across otherwise silent vista. KEITH LEE/INQUIRER

Congress bet gives up votes to hasten canvassing

GABAWAN CITY—DEPUTY COMELEC neither is a unique case, a candidate for a congressional seat in Nueva Ecija withdrew his protest contesting the 2007 votes that the province counted optical scan (POCS) machines churned out in his hometown.

It meant that 1,266 votes would no longer be credited to former Nueva Ecija Rep. Aurelio Manuel Joson, who ran in the town's elections to regain his seat in the first congressional district.

Instead, she would get only six votes, the total that the machines transmitted from the three precincts in Quezon, where the voted.

Her rival, former Rep. Rosario Diez of the Lakas-Kampi-CMD, lost 108 votes because of the transmission glitch.

Supreme Court has decided not to pursue the correction of the glitch," lawyer Claire Lahoza, secretary general of the Bagong Lakas ng Nueva Ecija (Bulacan), Joson's party, told the Inquirer by telephone.

"It is taking a long time to see reports from Bautista are not coming," he said.

He said Joson's complaint, if not withdrawn, would further delay the proclamation of winners for representative and board members in her district and for the elective posts in Quezon town.

Joson's husband, former Vice Gov. Mariano Cristino Joson, ran for mayor of Quezon town. Results from other provinces showed that his lead was insurmountable. He got 8,371 votes while his closest rival, retired police Supt. Tomas Hilvot, received 2,719 votes.

"Anyway, Representative Joson is leading in the vote counts in the district by a huge margin over her closest rival," Lahoza said.

Joson said a majority of the protests of election results in Quezon showed that the three precincts transmitted new votes for candidates with a few getting a maximum of two votes each per precinct.

Lahoza said election results in Quezon were already transmitted to the provincial board of canvassers.

He said only the results from Gumbin town, which belongs to the first congressional district, remained to be canvassed in the province.

Reports said two precincts in Gumbin have yet to complete the sending of results for the municipal canvass due to defective compact flash cards.

Another error

In Quezon province, the winning vice mayoral candidate in Alabel town nearly lost her victory when one of the POCS machines registered a zero vote.

Jasmine Dequilla, Alabel poll chief, said after the fifty-nine votes for Jocelyn Cruz-Sanchez were transmitted, while Cabaero (Bad Luck Jasmin Barbers (LP)—both received zero votes) 1,305 votes.

In the subsequent drawing of lot to break the tie, Herbert won, Dequilla said.

Meanwhile, when the statement of votes was being prepared, the local board of canvassers noticed that the result of the voting in one precinct in Barangay 5 with 700 registered voters, was not included in the tally.

"The PCOS registered a zero vote due to incorrect error in the machine. But the second number of votes of the two candidates was reflected in the ER (election return)," Dequilla said over the phone Friday.

When the votes reflected in the ER were added to those of the two candidates, Dequilla said Cabrera won by 115 votes over her opponent.

Cabrera's proclamation and those of the winning councilmen were still suspended, however, as they waited for the order from the Comelec central office to conduct a manual count for the said precinct for the official validation of votes.

"We also went to find out if the votes of the said precinct matched above the markings of winning candidates," Dequilla said.

The winning mayoral candidate, Arsenio Maceralla, was proclaimed on Tuesday. The discovered unaccounted votes were announced to the stunned race, he said. Arsenio Roque Inquirer Central Luzon, Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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KUMON

Defeated Lucena mayoral bet protests rival's win

LUCENA CITY—DESPITES WITH THE proclamation of Barbara Ruby Talaga, wife of incumbent Lucena Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr., as the winner in the mayoral race in the last election, a defeated candidate filed a protest case before the Commission on Elections.

Upon many other returns of Lucena in exercising the proclamation of Barbara Ruby Talaga as Lucena City mayor and condemn in the strongest possible terms this attempt to deceive us, all, celebrants, and thwart the electoral process," Senior Advocate, an independent candidate, said in a statement being distributed among churchgoers here Sunday.

Aldovino noted that Barbara did not file her certificate of candidacy on or before Dec. 14, 2009, the deadline for the filing.

However, Section 13 of Comelec Resolution No. 8678 says, "If, after the last day for the filing of certificate of candidacy (Dec. 14, 2009), an official candidate of a registered political party dies, withdraws or is disqualified for any cause, he may be substituted by a candidate belonging to, and nominated by, the same political party."

The resolution also provides that "The nominee for a candidate who died or suffered permanent incapacity or disqualified by final judgment, may file his certificate of candidacy up to mid-day of Election Day."

It was only after the election on May 10 that my sentiments learned that Mayor Talaga was not the candidate that was cancelled Barbara.

Comelec Lucena chief Jacqui Batungan, in an interview, confirmed that Barbara had substituted for Mayor Talaga in a document filed in her office on May 9.

Not illegal

"And there was nothing illegal in it. A disqualified candidate can be substituted," she explained.

The Comelec First Division disqualified Mayor Talaga in a resolution issued April 19, based on the petition of Vice Mayor Philip Castillo, who ran against the mayor.

In his petition, Castillo claimed that Mayor Talaga was ineligible to run for reelection on the ground that the latter had already been elected and completely served the position for more or less consecutive terms.

But Mayor Talaga continued with his re-election campaign and publicly proclaimed as political rallies from her rivals fight his disqualification up in the Supreme Court.

"The people of Lucena City were never informed that Barbara Ruby Talaga was a candidate. How can she recently and illegally usurp the office that we never elected her?" Aldovino charged.

Batungan tried to contact Barbara for her reaction to Aldovino's protest but Mayor Talaga spoke on her behalf.

"As early as December, I already announced that my wife would substitute for me since I was already disqualified. However, I continued to wage my campaign as I continued to hope for relief from the Comelec. The problem with the opposition is that they believed that I would really challenge my disqualification, until it reached the Supreme Court. Their focus was still on my candidacy. They did not bother to inquire from the Comelec," Talaga said in a phone interview Sunday.

Decision

The Comelec affirmed the decision to disqualify the mayor in a May 9 resolution.

In the final tally, Mayor Talaga got 44,099 votes while Castillo received 39,613.

The votes earned by Mayor Talaga were automatically considered votes for Barbara based on existing election laws on substitution.

The proclamation of Barbara on May 12 was withheld after Castillo questioned the legality of the substitution executed by the late elected candidate.

Batungan said Castillo asked for the stay of the Comelec order that recognized Barbara as the valid substitute of her husband.

The next day, Talaga's lawyer submitted the document from Comelec, which affirmed the validity of Barbara's substitution, leaving the city Board of canvassers with no choice but to proceed with Barbara's proclamation as the winner.

Aldovino also questioned the authenticity of more than 2,000 votes that he received during the last more than 5,000 witnesses.

Talaga said: "Anybody can sign a document and produce political support to a particular candidate but on Election Day most of them often change their minds."

He called on the political opposition to cast aside animosities and work together with the incoming administration for peace and progress of the city. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

New Maguindanao gov to focus on reconciliation

Special polls for Samar recommended

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE COMmission on Elections (Comelec) in Eastern Visayas has recommended the holding of special elections in five villages in Samar province because of the absence of the assigned members of the board of election inspectors (EIBs) to appear for their poll duties.

Comelec regional director Jose Mari Mendoza said he has submitted his recommendation and was just waiting for the Comelec decision.

The municipalities where re-elections were held on May 10 were Catubig (with 126 voters) and San Roque (280), both in Northern Samar province, and Matuguinao (1575), San Antonio (296) and Hinabangan (752), all in Eastern Samar province. Their votes total 3,812.

Security concerns

Mendoza said 860 members assigned to these villages, whose he declined to identify, did not report for their election duties due to "security concerns."

All the local winners in Matuguinao and Calbiga have, however, been proclaimed since the results in these villages could no longer materially alter the outcomes for local posts.

"But we have to conduct special elections in these villages for the purpose of determining the votes for those seeking national positions, including candidates under the party-list," Mendoza said.

Except for the failure to hold elections in the five Samar villages, the conduct of the first automated elections in the region was successful and orderly, said Mendoza.

The canvassing was also fast and transparent, with many watching local candidates proclaimed just hours after the close of the balloting.

Mendoza gave credit to the police and the military for the security measures that ensured the peaceful elections in Eastern Visayas.

PASTULAN FESTIVAL
Contingents from different barangays in San Pascual, Batangas, join the street dancing competition for the Pastulan Festival, which is part of the town fiesta celebration.

MAGBIBY AGUAK, MAGUINdanao—Saying that the lawmakers' concern of his administration is spending billions with political enemies, governor-elect Ismael Mangudadatu stressed that the "key to development is peace and reconciliation."

"There can never be peace and harmony if we are divided. Our people have suffered a lot from never-ending atrocities and armed confrontations," said Mangudadatu, the newly proclaimed governor whose wife, two sisters and several relatives were among 57 people, including at least 32 journalists, massacred last year in Maguindanao.

The Nov. 23 carnage has been blamed on the powerful Ampatuan political clan. Six prominent clan members led by patriarch Andal Ampatuan Sr. have been jailed.

Andal Sr. lost to Mangudadatu's running mate, Ismael "Datu" Mastura, in the vice gubernatorial race. This is said to be his first political downfall in many years.

Mastura, an academician, said his triumph against political giants was providential and vowed to help push the new administration's peace initiatives.

Mastura's father Michael, a member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front panel in the government's peace negotiations, urged the newly elected leaders to institute change for the benefit of their constituents.

He reminded would-be government executives to be open to criticisms and act decisively on matters of public interest.

Mangudadatu told reporters that he would tap the services of teachers, the religious and media people in the reconciliation process through the holding of peace dialogues and spiritual renewal activities.

His uncle, former congressman and Sultan Buldarn Guiapo Mangudadatu, appealed to aggrieved parties whose loved ones died in the Nov. 23 massacre, the country's worst election-related violence, not to put the law into their hands.

Assuring that due process shall work, Pat reminded members of the judiciary to decide cases fairly and judiciously.

"Let's punish the guilty because I believe not all the Ampatuans are involved in the massacre," he said. *Charlie C. Jordan, Inquirer Mindanao*

More winners in S. Leyte, Laguna

BAGUIO CITY—AFTER FIVE days of anxious waiting, the winners in six towns in South-ern Leyte that were delayed because of malfunctioned compact flash cards were finally proclaimed on Friday.

The resolutions of the vic-

tims in these towns also led to the proclamation of the winners in the provincial level, also on Friday.

Lubao Rampil-CMD party candidates swept the elective posts in Maasin City and the 19 towns of Southern Leyte, except in St. Bernard, where incumbent Mayor Rico Bercasio (Liberal Party) and his slate won all the posts.

But for the presidential race, it was LP standard-bearer Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III who got the most number of votes (80,171), with Lubao-Rampil-CMD lee Gilbert Teodoro coming in second with 60,456 votes.

Voter turnout in the province was placed at 70 percent, with 236,666 of the 267,616 registered voters actually voting.

In the vice presidential race, Aquino's running mate Mar Roxas II won first with 76,696 votes. Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay (Partido ng Masang Pilipino) was second with 47,672 votes.

Rep. Roger Mercado won re-elected with 123,812 votes against former Rep. Antonio Sebastian, who got 61,389 votes.

The Lubaos were again treasured by Gov. Dominic Rivera and Mayor Mahony Banzon of Maasin City.

Governor Mercado fielded a new Marino "Dandoy" Lubao in the gubernatorial race with 132,606 against the latter's 42,436, while Banzon got an overwhelming mandate of 26,080 votes against former Gov. Rosette Lerias. Dandoy's mother, who only got 13,320 votes.

The Lubao camp has accused the Mercados of rampant vote buying, allegations that the Mercados denied.

In Laguna, redder in the 2007 elections when movie star Angelica Jones, or Angelica H. Hidrosa in real life, swept over her ballots to bag a seat in provincial board member in the third district, this time, she is all smiles after winning and being proclaimed provincial board member.

She failed to make it to her home place in San Pablo City by garnering only third place in the nine-candidate contest, lost won in all the municipalities in District III, with 60,766 votes that placed her second to the front runner, former police official and confidencist Reynaldo D. Perez who got 66,827 votes.

Jun-I Arimido, Inquirer Visayas; Romulo B. Pelejo, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Polls show Filipinos' passion for democracy

From page A1

ercent seemed to indicate little more than a failure of political awareness.

These two events have shaped my perception of politics, of governance and institutional reform, and are a large part of why I chose to go on to graduate school.

Nothing compares

Governorship for me, we went heading for another kind. March elections just as I was wrapping up my fieldwork, going me another shot at watching Philippine history in the making.

My dissertation focuses on the different strategies that candidates employ to win elections, which range from legal strategies like ad campaigns and policy platforms, to vote buying, fraud, and election-related violence.

Leading up to the elections, I was inundated with the usual end-of-race numbers in the TV commercials, the catchy jingles on the radio, and the posters, banderitas, and ribbons bedecking the entire city. They made me feel excited, anticipating an election I had dedicated my life to studying.

But the week after the May 10 elections, I was in the Ateneo library to research for graphic detail his near brush with death. His left shoulder was on a sling, his neck bandaged and his head tilted to one side. He spoke of a shrapnel... he believes it popped the wire used, apparently, to detonate the bomb.

Long lines, not goons

It looked much like a movie set—binoculars, flags, food and drink stalls, and people in color-coordinated outfits milling about. Campaign posters were still up—as the walk around the entrance to the polling place, and flyers and sample ballots littered the streets.

The policemen were armed and good-naturedly posed for pictures when they saw my camera—and no doubt I counted that my camera might be confiscated.

Later in the day, my mom Rosa Amancio-David, my uncle Pio David, and my cousin Pio-Pio took me on a trekking tour through four polling places in Pasig and Makati.

At our high school, they remembered remaining back in 2004 some goons chasing a man through the hallways, which was a stark contrast to the orderly of long lines, waiting women, and assigned numbers during Monday's election. It was unbearably hot and crowded, and tempers were short because of the long waits, but everyone seemed in high spirits and eager to vote.

Money in sample ballots

In each of the polling places, the reasons we got out of our car, people handed us sample ballots and flyers.

In White Plains, the friendly walking ahead of us refused the sample ballots, saying it was "confusing" to use them as a guide if they weren't blank.

When conducting household surveys earlier in the year, I had found almost sample ballots littered near the vote buying—politicians would distribute lists in the folded sample ballot and perhaps include a sheet of carbon paper so that the actual vote could be verified afterwards.

Now, according to what being is fully disappointed that all the votes I got were plain ballots. After all the reported increase in fresh vote buying and the price per vote, I was hoping to see it for myself. But purely academic reasons, of course, and nothing to do with the planned shopping trip I had due the following day!

All talk is about politics

I was pleasantly surprised at how well-informed people were about the elections. Instead of the usual afternoon discussions between family and friends.

Pasig had prepared for two sets of candidates—a first vote as a guide for voting, which to me seemed like a mock. Some days ago the sample ballots.

Everywhere we went, people were talking about the elections...among friends and neighbors about their choices and debating the issues with total strangers next to them in line.

There didn't seem to be any animosity when people found themselves on opposite sides—certainly nothing like the deep division between American voters who find themselves opposite sides of the ideological spectrum.

No secrecy

Another surprise that I didn't find to be nearly as pleasant was that had never set voting booths or partitions.

In fact, in White Plains, I, unknowingly wandered all the way to the voting tables because I didn't realize that the people sitting at the folding tables were filling out their ballots. I thought it was a second waiting area because there were 10-12 people sitting around each table, some shouting while some had their children and drop with them.

People had folders that they could secretly give themselves some privacy, but they were sitting in each-box quarters and there were so many people milling about that most people didn't even bother trying to shield their ballots.

People didn't even seem to mind looking their ballots into the PCOS machines to fall view of the other voters.

Important first step

Our survey seems like such a simple and small thing, but it's an important first step to making it more difficult for politicians to engage in more serious forms of illegal voter interventions. After all, "vote buying, intimidation, and other tactics are most effective when they can be targeted to the appropriate groups of voters.

For example, mayoral and legislature seats, there's much less of a chance to democracy if it cost to pay to vote for a candidate that he/she prizes to vote for anyone than if the voter is still on the fence.

Similarly, threats of retribution work only if the politicians have a credible way of finding out who voted against them.

Voters and voting

The playwright Tom Stoppard once wrote: "It's not the

AQUINO and his supporters flash the "Laban!" (Fight!) sign as they pose for a campaign souvenir shot.

counting, but the people who do the counting that's democracy, it's the voting."

Perhaps it's just the nature of my studies, but I've always paid more attention to the "counting." Observing the May 10 elections made me realize that my focus on politicians and parties is misplaced, at least sometimes. I'm missing a crucial part of the picture: voters and voting.

The passion Filipinos have for democracy can make up for many shortcomings in the electoral procedures, including long lines, inconsistencies in the rules, and outright fraud and voter intimidation. In the Philippines, we can't get the moment voters in the Philippines even with much re-voting, to make sure that their votes are heard. In this past election abroad, at least in the Philippines, democracy is in the voting, too.

(Richard V. Anderson is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at the University of Michigan, San Diego. He has also been a consultant for various international organizations.)

'People's President' embraces destiny

From page A1

one late night in 1997 when he was ambushed by renegade military forces in a coup attempt against the Aquino administration, one of eight. With his security detail, he managed his way back to refuge from the south of Manila. His body-guards, except one, were killed in the ambush.

Barely a week after that bloody night, he asked us over to the Aquino House to recount in graphic detail his near brush with death. His left shoulder was on a sling, his neck bandaged and his head tilted to one side. He spoke of a shrapnel... he believes it popped the wire used, apparently, to detonate the bomb. Doctors... examinations helped beneath his left ear to this day.)

"They would not leave us alone," we remember him saying. He spoke with measured bits of confidence, words he uttered in short staccato bursts. He spoke as a man with the heart of three pinned to the floor of the bullet-proof Jeep, his dying bodyguard, crumpled on top of him to protect him, muttering incessantly: "Okay lo-ko, sir?"

The blood he wore was soaked in blood—his and his bodyguard's—and torn in shreds in some portions. It was even "restless" we noted then, that the salvaged jacket of his fallen political martyr Benigno Aquino Jr.

Life under siege

While he had a second lease on life after that night, his other brushes with death were many. This was the same young man who, flying in from Boston in August 1983 where the family lived in exile, stood for the first time before the coffin of his assassinated father and, even before he would address a reporter waiting to smack with a question—"So how did you feel getting the false Marcial Rodriguez passport?"

"I probably looked more than, and clueless, apologized, that the reporter thought I'd take the bait," he recalled his only vulnerability. (He didn't answer the reporter.)

Living under siege vaulted having a mind for resiliency and, figure as a leader, and as the next president. He picked up target shooting and indulged his love of guns—a hobby he hasn't stopped pursuing.

In this presidential campaign, his debt settled here, there a bold stroke here in the night, when their enemy was passing through deserted fields. Aquino would just ask that one gun from his security staff be handed over to him which he would then keep under his lap, as the small elections might be, but I still weren't quite prepared for what it would be like to accompany my aunt, Annie Gan, and my cousin, Rina, to their polling place in White Plains, Quezon City.

Long lines, not goons

It looked much like a movie set—binoculars, flags, food and drink stalls, and people in color-coordinated outfits milling about. Campaign posters were still up—as the walk around the entrance to the polling place, and flyers and sample ballots littered the streets.

The policemen were armed and good-naturedly posed for pictures when they saw my camera—and no doubt I counted that my camera might be confiscated.

Later in the day, my mom Rosa Amancio-David, my uncle Pio David, and my cousin Pio-Pio took me on a trekking tour through four polling places in Pasig and Makati.

At our high school, they remembered remaining back in 2004 some goons chasing a man through the hallways, which was a stark contrast to the orderly of long lines, waiting women, and assigned numbers during Monday's election. It was unbearably hot and crowded, and tempers were short because of the long waits, but everyone seemed in high spirits and eager to vote.

Money in sample ballots

In each of the polling places, the reasons we got out of our car, people handed us sample ballots and flyers.

In White Plains, the friendly walking ahead of us refused the sample ballots, saying it was "confusing" to use them as a guide if they weren't blank.

When conducting household surveys earlier in the year, I had found almost sample ballots littered near the vote buying—politicians would distribute lists in the folded sample ballot and perhaps include a sheet of carbon paper so that the actual vote could be verified afterwards.

Now, according to what being is fully disappointed that all the votes I got were plain ballots. After all the reported increase in fresh vote buying and the price per vote, I was hoping to see it for myself. But purely academic reasons, of course, and nothing to do with the planned shopping trip I had due the following day!)

All talk is about politics

I was pleasantly surprised at how well-informed people were about the elections. Instead of the usual afternoon discussions between family and friends.

Pasig had prepared for two sets of candidates—a first vote as a guide for voting, which to me seemed like a mock. Some days ago the sample ballots.

Everywhere we went, people were talking about the elections...among friends and neighbors about their choices and debating the issues with total strangers next to them in line.

There didn't seem to be any animosity when people found themselves on opposite sides—certainly nothing like the deep division between American voters who find themselves opposite sides of the ideological spectrum.

No secrecy

Another surprise that I didn't find to be nearly as pleasant was that had never set voting booths or partitions.

In fact, in White Plains, I, unknowingly wandered all the way to the voting tables because I didn't realize that the people sitting at the folding tables were filling out their ballots. I thought it was a second waiting area because there were 10-12 people sitting around each table, some

AQUINO and his supporters flash the "Laban!" (Fight!) sign as they pose for a campaign souvenir shot.

(Photo by Ed Lacson)

Ateneo, Ateneo Grill leader, Paul Colred.

His hair is short cropped...enough to camouflage the trimming. But a friend of the family said that most members of the family (especially fans of "Bones, Instead" would encounter his 200-mm uncle to undergo the bouncy procedure.

Top Cabinet wives

Since the presidency of his mom, he's known the dos and dos of power and, it seems to us, not blind to the luxurious hangers-on of power. He's kept the same set of friends from his school days, and those friends didn't acquire their wives over him when he was in Congress or in the friends. They've just flown when he needs them, like in his presidential campaign.

But he said on the last day of the campaign, not all of them were in his corner. He stressed when he goes to Malacañang. "Gusto ni even planning to an gyera," he said of a close friend.

His siblings, of course, will be around him, unless he assumes the presidency, but he said, he may not necessarily pass on the First Lady duties to them, living up them always into the presidency, he said, is "like setting down up for surgery. I have asked enough of them already."

He said he might tap the wives of his Cabinet members to stand in on some ceremonial chores—similar perhaps to what the Cabinet Ladies Foundation did in the Ramos administration.

What will his celebrity wife Iris do in his presidency? "Probably nothing," he said. "She will have to make up for lost time in her careers."

Long drives relaxing

The past months, just about the only normal enjoyments he's had were to visit himself our sights in his mother's theater, and to drive from Manila to Tarlac one no-traffic night. Long drives are his form of relaxation. (The can say goodbye to those now.)

In the next six years, he must prove that he is no mere boulevardier of fans.

And he's eating to assume the presidency having his pledges, pile of tasks—correct to it, "I will not run to myself," he said, "and I aim to bring my intellectual ology of politics to it. As the campaign showed, one doesn't have to buy (the presidency); one can go direct to the voters, the people."

"What it gets to the point that we turn politics into a party, when the politician takes power, he becomes a spy."

And he wasn't speaking when he said that.

STA. LUCIA forward Hubert Davison tries to go for a reverse against the defense of Barako import Milan Jovfevic.

Kings wake up, rip revamped Realtors

Beermen make it eight straight victories

By Marc[illegible] B. Carullo

JONG UICHICO FINALLY FLASHED A SMILE AFTER winning, but it was a very guarded one.

Uichico's Barangay Ginebra crew humiliated Sta. Lucia, 102-85, on the Araneta Coliseum last night, although the mild-mannered coach insisted it wasn't a victory which he could use to gauge how far his Gin Kings will go for the rest of the PBA Fiesta Conference.

"It's hard to make this a judgment game because Sta. Lucia [just] lost its core," Uichico said. "But at least we saw something positive today. We played more as a team and they [Kings] tried their very best out there and there was fire in the way they played."

The Gin Kings, who went back-to-back games for the first time since Willie Miller arrived from Alaska, led by as many as 23 points in improving to 8-4.

"It's something we can build on," added Uichico, who openly expressed displeasure over the way his team seen rare of its last four games since acquiring former two-time MVP Miller from Alaska.

In the second game, Ian Miguel then turned on a big third-quarter run to rip Barako Coffee, 104-92, to notch its eighth straight triumph.

Trailing mostly on free throws, the Beermen fattened a 18-point lead to 18, 66-48, halfway through the third period as they went right of JO from the stripe in a three-minute stretch there on the way to their ninth win in 12 games.

After a couple of exchanges by both squads featuring a dunk and a triple by Gabe Freeman, veteran Danny Ildefonso hit two more freebies to kick off another San Miguel run that gave the Beermen an 81-54 cushion late in the third.

Freeman led the game with three minutes left in the third and no longer returned to the match, by the time coach Ilet Tanquingcen pulled out Arwind Santos with 7:49 left in the match, the Beermen were playing with the furthest out of their bench.

That flew, though, still included two-time MVP Ildefonso, former Finals MVP Danny Seigle and Arwin Villanueva, who held for the one of the very against the struggling Coffee Masters, who dropped to 2-9.

Sta. Lucia, which also struggled with first-time players acquired after losing Kelly Williams and Ryan Reyes to a knee[illegible] issues to Talk N' Text last Thursday, dropped to six wins in 9-6 card.

"In terms of filling up the positions [left by Williams], we're OK in the big guy spot [with Ali Peek and Nic Belasco]," Sta. Lucia coach Bayer Hernandez said. "But we still have so many things to work on."

Yousif Aljamal was the Fuss performer among the wins wonders for Sta. Lucia after finishing with 22 points. Peek and Belasco were good for that and four points, respectively, and a combined 19 rebounds.

RED Bull driver Mark Webber smiles in front of a television cameraman after clinching pole position in the Monaco Grand Prix.

Webber sets stage for career 'highlight'

MONACO—MARK WEBBER WAS insane in qualifying for the Monaco Grand Prix on Sunday to give Red Bull its ninth straight start from pole position this Formula One season.

The Australian, coming off a victory at the Spanish GP in which he led all the way from top spot on the grid, had a quicker lap time of 1 minute, 13.626 seconds around the winding street circuit to claim his fourth career pole.

Robert Kubica of Renault will start second ahead of Sebastian Vettel of Red Bull and Felipe Massa of Ferrari goes from fourth, followed by Lewis Hamilton of McLaren.

Fernando Alonso will start from pit lane after missing qualifying because his Ferrari was eliminated by crashing into a barrier during the final practice session earlier Saturday.

Webber beat Button by nearly two-tenths of a second to set a course record for pole.

"It's a riskier event in terms of reliability for mistakes," Webber said. "It felt like I found another tenth to some of the Mercs in the car today. I know how important it was to nail a good lap because of the competition."

Webber is looking to become just the second Australian after Jack Brabham to win at the iconic circuit. With teammate struggling to match Red Bull's pace and on a narrow circuit offering few overtaking chances, Webber is set up for a fourth career victory.

"I wouldn't be here without Jack Brabham," Webber said. "It would be the biggest highlight of my career if I could join him tomorrow but I'm not cocky say Monaco that it's going to be handed to me."

Overall 31 leader and defending champion Jenson Button will start eighth behind Michael Schumacher, who fell a spot back of Nico Rosberg after his Mercedes teammate inadvertently blocked him.

"You know what Monaco is like—on other it happens," said Schumacher, a five-time winner here. AP

Batang Texters forge 96-point triumph

BATANG TALK 'N' TEXT (2010) CITY and Barangay Coca-Cola-Markilan swept the group-finalization of the Coca-Cola-Batang PBA Summer League yesterday with commanding victories at the old San Juan gym.

Two-time defending champion Batang Texters crushed hapless Batang Hondo Energy Coffee-Manila, 109-12, to stay unbeaten in four games at the end of the single round eliminations in Group B. In contrast, the Batang Tigers had to overcome a fourth quarter charge by the Batang Rain or Shine-Imus Asset to escape with a 69-64 decision in Group A.

Jake Morelos scored 18 of his 27 points in the first quarter, Carl Bautista had 13 while John Vincent Gallego and Aaron Sto. Domingo added 12 apiece for the Batang Texters, who are aiming for a fourth championship in seven years.

Jeanroh Andaya and Jonas Baligad had five points each for Manila, which wound up its campaign without a win in four games.

John Adolfo Salmon poured 21 points and Alwyn Santos added 15 for the Batang Tigers.

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DID YOU KNOW

ON MAY 17, 1982, elections for the positions of barangay captain and six councilors per barangay were held for the first time. There were 42,000 barangays in the country.
Cyril L. Bonalaensi, Inquirer Research

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TRAGEDY ON SKYWAY

4 dead in road mishap

By Miko Morales

FOUR PEOPLE WERE KILLED, three of them children, when a sport utility vehicle slammed into a concrete barrier of the Skyway near San Valley Subdivision in Bicutan, Parañaque City, at around 2 p.m. yesterday.

Virgilio Dupaya, an employee of Skyway O&M (Stanex) which operates the expressway, said the Toyota Fortuner (UMU 698) was probably cruising above the speed limit of 100 kilometers per hour when it hit the barrier and flipped over.

"It could have been going at over 100 kph," he told the Inquirer on the phone.

Dupaya said Cheryl Joy Perdon, 10; Shaniest Perdon, 5; and Daryl Lopez, 10, were killed instantly while the driver, Schuer Rabulan, 33, was taken to Paranaque Doctors Hospital for treatment.

However, she died several hours later, PO2 Richard Monreve, an investigator of the Highway Patrol Group, reported.

Lost control

Dupaya added that based on their initial investigation, the driver may have lost control of the vehicle, causing it to crash into the road barrier. He said there were no other vehicles in the area at that time.

Ed Hapecassion, Innova+ operations manager, said that after the SUV hit the barrier, it flipped over several times before coming to a rest upside down, nearly 100 meters away from the site of impact.

He added that one of the vehicle's tires was found which may have triggered the accident.

Hapecassion also said they were checking if the victim's car was in a runaway mish and her vehicle. The victims were reportedly on their way to a theme park in Laguna when the SUV hit the road barrier.

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3 more fires hit Metro

By Miko Morales and DJ Yap

THREE MORE FIRES BROKE OUT IN THE metropolis just hours after 4,500 families were left homeless in a blaze which struck a compound in Muntinlupa City on Saturday morning.

Residents of the Canonau and Banyo compounds were still sifting through what remained of their houses when another fire was reported in the city, this time at a three-story factory, at 10:30 p.m.

The boys were killed in the fire while 21-year-old Lilian Sandoval was brought to a hospital for minor injuries.

Firemen later found the bodies of Edlyn Sandoval, 18 and Mark Sandoval, 10, inside their home.

Another fire

Meanwhile, a fire hit a junk shop in Pasig City and destroyed about half a million pesos worth of property shortly after midnight yesterday.

The blaze started at 12:40 a.m. in Metro Recovery, a shop owned by Jaime Gonzaro, 60, and located on Boulevard Avenue, the angry Pasig barkers, arson investigators

| MORE A26

MMDA's daily haul: 2 truckloads of poll posters

By Mike Navales

MAKERS OF THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) have taken down campaign materials weighing at least six tons since the agency started its cleanup of major thoroughfares last Tuesday.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nazareno yesterday said their daily haul of donated election posters would fill at least two trucks.

Since the start of the cleanup drive last week, the agency has cleared seven major roads of eyesores, particularly – and posters which were put up by local and national candidates, he added.

Materials to be donated

Nazareno said the MMDA was planning to donate the election materials it had collected although it was still in the process of evaluating requests from nongovernment organizations, including a livelihood group in Pateros, Quezon City schools makes bags from recyclable items.

"We're storing the materials at the meantime," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Almost a week after the May 10 elections, the MMDA has completed its cleanup of Edsa, Roxas Boulevard, C-5 Road, Mayflower Highway, Radial Road 10, Commonwealth Avenue and Marcos Highway.

But although satisfied with his men's accomplishment, MMDA Chair Oscar Inumerable also warned candidates to get involved in the cleaning operations, according to Nazareno.

Hopeful

He said that during their area counting, Inumerable plans to talk to Metro Manila mayors to pass a law requiring all candidates, both winners and losers, to take down their campaign materials right after the conduct of elections.

Nazareno said the MMDA was hopeful of getting the full support of local officials as he once again stressed the importance of cleaning Metro Manila of road obstructions and hazards before the start of the rainy season.

The MMDA had earlier said that election posters and streamers, if not taken down before next month, could end up clogging drainage systems and waterways, leading to floods.

On standby

Nazareno also added that the agency's personnel and equipment were on standby should local governments ask for their assistance in cleaning up their areas.

METRO

Citizen's call

0919-8888888

RETHINK BAN, PLEASE

Cheryl Jil, of Cavite writes: "I hope that Mayor [Alfredo] Lim reconsiders his decision to prohibit provincial buses from entering Manila. This won't affect the local government too much since the officials here live near one another. But what about students and workers who have to commute from the provinces? It is inconvenient to transfer from one bus to another once you enter the city and it will even be more difficult during the rainy season. Is someone who commutes every day from Cavite to Manila, I know that it is not just provincial buses who cause traffic in the city, the city buses and passenger jeepneys are also to blame."

Vendors occupy sidewalk

THE VENDORS on Mayflower Road in front of the National Housing Authority office up to Kalayaan Avenue have occupied the sidewalks with permit, forcing to walk on the streets. Manila Housing Development Authority, please do something about this.

Jeanne, 27, Quezon City

Vendors take over bridge

MAYOR Medina, some vendors occupy not mediators ang side walk ng Pateros bridge, mayor ganoon si mayor, ang mga tao nasa kalsada na lang sila maglakad, please po.

Name, 27, Quezon City

Heavy traffic blamed on pedicab drivers

PLEASE remove all pedicabs on Vito Cruz Extension and Buhaida Street in Manila. Their drivers have no discipline and they are everywhere, causing heavy traffic in the area. Mayor Lim, please take action.

Jill Ley, 27, Manila City

Vendors, jeepneys cause heavy traffic

THERE are dozens of hot-carts near Ninth Elliptical Roadway Recreation Center in Diliman every weekends. The vendors block the sidewalks, jeepneys are also parked in the streets near the area, leading to heavy traffic.

Name withheld, 25, Quezon City

Barangay outpost blocking sidewalk

THERE is a barangay outpost on Anonuevo Street close to the church. The outpost has "Mobile" written on it with metal letters. The outpost is now blocking the sidewalk.

Marlon Mirabueno, 30, Quezon City

Footbridge needed on Commonwealth

WE PEOPLE living in need an additional footbridge. It's really dangerous to cross Commonwealth Avenue but since there's no footbridge near my area, we have no choice. We are asking the MMDA to build one on a busy area after the one at Litex.

Josephine Lilan, 49, Quezon City

3 more fires hit Metro

From page A11

FDO Bulletin V. Bhanzilla said, No one was hurt in the blaze.

The investigators said the fire originated on the "right rear portion" of the junk shop but the cause was still under investigation. The fire reached the first floor and was put out at 1:06 a.m.

In Quezon City, a leak from a liquefied petroleum gas tank being sold in a sari-sari store caused a fire on Nebraska corner Kabulagang Geneva in Barangay Kaunlaran at around 11 a.m. yesterday.

Unauthorized dealers

The owners of the store, Bojet and MJ Antonillo, suffered minor injuries after they were trapped in their two-story house.

The conflagration, which was located on the ground floor, still killed LPG tanks although the Antonillos were not authorized dealers.

Firemen from the Litex Fire Station put the fire out in 20 minutes. *With Nancy C. Carvajal and Mike Orcon Frondoso, contributor*

Manila International Airport Authority

INVITATION TO BID

Items	Specifications
1. Supply and Delivery of Fuel	1,000,000 liters
2. Supply and Delivery of Lubricants	1,000 liters
3. Supply and Delivery of Fuel Additives	1,000 liters

Woman's decaying body found

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE DECAYING BODY OF A 68-year-old woman was found on Saturday night inside her own, at room in Manila.

PO3 Lester Evangelista of the Manila Police District's homicide section identified the victim as Amelia Cruz, a resident of Bagbag Street in Sta. Cruz.

Her body was discovered when a friend of hers dropped by for a visit at around 11:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Cruz's friend, identified only as Tita, told the police that she was about to knock on the door of the victim's room when she noticed a foul smell coming from within.

When nobody answered the door despite her repeated knocks, Tita said she asked Cruz's landlady to open the door with a duplicate key.

Evangelista said the victim's body was already in a state of decomposition and that she could have been dead for more than 24 hours before she was discovered.

He added that the body would be subjected to an autopsy as there were no signs of external injuries.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT – CARAGA
Butuan City

INVITATION TO SUBMIT BID FOR EXPANSION OF INFIRMARY

Items	Specifications
1. Infirmary of the Government	Beds 20, 20-00
2. Medical Consultation	Beds 20, 20-00 (per bed/day)
3. Administration of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (if single, assign nothing) to submit applications	
4. Opening of Bids	June 5, 10:00 (30 minutes)
5. Bid Evaluation	June 5 to 8, 2010
6. Post-qualification	June 9 to 12, 2010
7. Notice of Award	June 13, 2010

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health – Caraga, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective bidders for the following projects/contracts to apply for eligibility and to bid for the transaction project:

Name of Project	Location / Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration
CATERING SERVICES AND BOARD & LODGING (San Juan Hospital, Surigao del Norte)			
LAUNDRY SERVICES AND BOARD & LODGING (San Juan Hospital, Surigao del Norte)			

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Only those bidders who pass the eligibility screening will be allowed to purchase the bid documents.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Bid Form, Conference(s), Evaluation of Bid(s), Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 10, 2010
2. Pre-Bid Conference	May 10, 2010 (1:00 PM)
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (if single, assign nothing) to submit applications	
4. Opening of Bids	June 5, 10:00 (30 minutes)
5. Bid Evaluation	June 5 to 8, 2010
6. Post-qualification	June 9 to 12, 2010
7. Notice of Award	June 13, 2010

For single-stage bidding:

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Pesos Only (Php3,000.00) for CATERING SERVICES and Five Thousand Pesos Only (Php5,000.00) for CATERING to Cash Department of Health – Center for Health Development – Caraga Central Section.

The Department of Health – Center for Health Development – Caraga reserves its responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidder(s) for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) FLORENCIO B. GUADO, CPA, Ph.D.
BAC Chairperson

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation (Privatization Management Office) invites interested bidders to participate in and bid for the Appointment as IPP Administrator (IPPA) for the:

Kalayaan Complex of the Unified Leyte Geothermal Power Plants with an installed capacity of 345 MW and located in Kalayaan, Leyte ("Leyte Commercial Capacity")

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) to the Committee which shall state the full names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of the principal contact person designated by an authorized representative. The LOI must apply to the Leyte Commercial Capacity. All LOIs must be received by the Committee on the Pre-Bid Conference date at the 7th Floor Boardroom Building, PSALM Corporate Center, Barangay Sikatuna Village, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila ("Head Office"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the bidding process.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality, Non-Disclosure and Non-Circumvention Agreement in Section 75 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of **Five Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S. $5,000.00)** (the "Participation Fee") at the Cashier's Office, Ground Floor, Head Office, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila. If any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before 5:00 p.m. on 07 June 2010, which is the deadline for the submission of the Letter of Intent and the submission of the Participation Fee for the Leyte Commercial Capacity.

The Bidding Package, which includes the Bidding Procedures, shall be issued during office hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 07 to 21 June 2010 (the "Deadline") at the Head Office. Only interested parties who have submitted the LOI, executed the Confidentiality Agreement and paid the Participation Fee shall be allowed to participate further in the bidding process for the appointment as IPP Administrator for the Leyte Commercial Capacity.

The Bidding Package, which includes the Bidding Procedures, shall be issued during office hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 07 to 21 June 2010 (the "Deadline") at the Head Office. Only interested parties who have submitted the LOI, executed the Confidentiality Agreement and paid the Participation Fee shall be allowed to participate further in the bidding process for the appointment as IPP Administrator for the Leyte Commercial Capacity.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit issued by a bank duly accredited by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, payable to the Bidding Participant (the "Bid Security").

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Date Obtained	07 May 2010 until 2 Business days prior to bid submission deadline
Pre-Bid Conference	1:30 p.m. on 16 June 2010 at the Head Office
Bid Submission Deadline	10:00 a.m. on 21 June 2010 at the Head Office

Reference is the dates and times stated on Head Office. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time on the immediately succeeding business day. (Sgd.) ROMEO L. BAUTISTA

A non-refundable bidding system will be adopted. Interested Parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to **Two Million U.S. Dollars (U.S. $ 10,000,000.00)** in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit which must be valid for a minimum of 120 calendar days from the date of bid opening. It shall be established by a performance security to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. The Committee reserves the right to divide the Leyte Commercial Capacity into separate lots.

The details of the appointment as IPP Administrator for the Leyte Contracted Capacity are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings must be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 7th Floor, Boardroom Building, PSALM Corporate Center, Barangay Sikatuna Village, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila or delivered to Mr. Peter D. Acuña at the Project Office, or at telephone number (632) 926-5555 or e-mail address: **pdacuna@psalm.gov.ph**.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or cancel/abort any bidding process, or any part thereof, at any time prior to the actual award of the Contract, without incurring any liability whatsoever to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any responsibility for any costs incurred by interested parties for the preparation of their bids nor does it accept any part of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, change, suspend or terminate the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and time periods set forth herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements or changes.

(Sgd.) LORELY C. MAZETA
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

MetroBriefs

2 dead, 1 hurt in shooting

TWO MINORS were killed while their youngest sibling was seriously hurt when a group of men fired at them in Barangay Payong Tamo, Quezon City on Saturday night. PO3 Joselito Salgado of the Quezon City Police District Homicide Section identified the victims killed as Lei Marvin Medalla, 27, a construction worker, and his brother Ralph, 25. The victims' youngest brother, Mark Lloyd Medalla, 19, was taken to a hospital where he remains confined. The police said the brothers, all residents of Freedom Village in Barangay Payong Tamo, Quezon City, were drinking with their other people on the street when they were fired at by a group of men. The victims were rushed to the hospital where Lei and Ralph, who sustained multiple gunshot wounds, died while undergoing treatment. The police said the motive behind the shooting was not known. Police are looking for the suspects who are still being investigated.

Nancy C. Carvajal with Mike Orcon Frondoso, contributor

Fetuses found in Manila

TWO 17-week fetuses were found inside public toilets on opposite occasions in Manila on Saturday. The first one was found at 5:30 a.m. in a public toilet at the corner of Lilac and Enriquez Streets in Pasay. The second was found some 13 hours later in a fast food restaurant, SPCD Jollibee, along the Manila-Cavite Expressway. Homicide section said the first fetus, aborted five to seven months, was found by 55-year-old handyman Jose Dimaculangan when he attempted to repair a clogged toilet. He immediately reported his discovery to the police. The police said they received another call at around 8 p.m. when a fetus was found inside a plastic bag in the restroom of a fast food restaurant at the corner of Gumisa and Tali Avenues in Bacoor, Cavite. Christopher Agot, a utility personnel of the restaurant, said he discovered the fetus in a bottle that had been placed inside the toilet bowl. Both fetuses were brought to St. Harold funeral parlor.

Paolo Conde, contributor

K for K fun run on May 29

COME 5,000 runners are expected to join the Run 4 Alkansiya for K-Cel K for K, a fun run aiming to raise funds for orphans, abandoned children, street children, out-of-school youth and women in crisis. It for it, which is open for the public, will be held at the SM Mall of Asia grounds at 5:30 a.m. on May 29. The fun run will be led by lay-evangelist Bro. Eli Soriano, founder of the inspirational magazine Ang Dating Daan. The registration fee is P350 for adults and P150 for children aged 12 and below. To register, visit www.fightSars.com/k4k or call 7250000.

Despite concerns, US still using private spy ring

WASHINGTON—THE MILITARY officials have continued to rely on a secret network of private spies who have produced hundreds of reports from deep inside Afghanistan and Pakistan, according to American officials and business executives, despite concerns among some in the military about the legality of the operation.

Earlier this year, government officials admitted that the military had sent a group of former Central Intelligence Agency officers and retired special operations troops into the region to collect information—some of which was used in attack and kill people suspected of being militants. Many portrayed it as a rogue operation that had been hastily shut down soon as investigations began.

But interviews with more than a dozen current and former government officials and businessmen, and an examination of government documents, tell a different story. Not only are the networks still operating, their detailed reports on subjects like the workings of the Taliban leadership in Pakistan and the movements of enemy fighters in southern Afghanistan are also actively used almost daily as top commanders and have become an important source of intelligence.

The American military is largely prohibited from operating inside Pakistan. And under Pentagon rules, the Army is not allowed to hire subcontractors for spying.

Military officials said that when Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top commander in the region, signed off on the operation in January 2008, there were prohibitions against intelligence gathering, including hiring agents to provide information about enemy positions in Pakistan. The contractors were supposed to provide only broad information about the political and tribal dynamics in the region, and information that could be used for "force protection," they said.

Some Pentagon officials said that over time, the operation appeared to morph into traditional spying activities. And they pointed out that the supervisor who set up the extensive network, Michael D. Furlong, was now under investigation.

But a review of the program by The New York Times found that Furlong's operations never officially exceeded the military guidelines. Furlong remains at his job, working in a senior civilian Air Force official.

A senior defense official said that the Pentagon decided last recently not to renew the contract, which expires at the end of May. While the Pentagon declined to discuss the program, it appears that commanders in the field are in no rush to close it down because some of the information has been highly valuable, particularly in protecting troops against enemy attacks. NYT

TO SAVE THE MOTHER

Phoenix nun rebuked for allowing abortion

PHOENIX—A NUN AND AD-ministrator at a Catholic hospital in Phoenix has been reassigned and rebuked by the local bishop for agreeing that a severely ill woman needed an abortion to survive.

Sister Margaret McBride was in an ethics committee that included doctors that considered with a young woman who was 11 weeks pregnant late last year, The Arizona Republic newspaper reported on its website on Saturday. The woman was suffering from a life-threatening condition that likely would have caused her death if she hadn't had the abortion at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center.

Hospital officials defended McBride's actions but confirmed that she has been reassigned from her job as vice president of mission integration at the hospital. They said in a statement that **saving the mother required that the fetus be aborted.**

"In this tragic case, the treatment necessary to save the mother's life required the termination of an 11-week pregnancy," hospital vice president Susan Flower said in an e-mail to the newspaper. She said the facility is owned by Catholic Healthcare West adheres to the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services but that the directives do not answer all questions.

Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted, head of the Phoenix diocese, indicated in a statement that the Roman Catholic involved was "automatically excommunicated" because of the action. The Catholic Church allows the **excommunication** of a pregnancy only as a secondary effect of other treatments, such as **sedation of a convicted nurse.**

"I am gravely concerned by the fact that an abortion was performed to end the life of an unborn child," Olmsted said in a statement sent to The Arizona Republic. "I am further concerned by the hospital's statement that the termination of a human life was necessary to treat the mother's underlying medical condition.

"An unborn child is not a disease. While medical professionals should certainly try to save a pregnant mother's life, the means by which they do it can never be by directly killing her unborn child. The end does not justify the means."

Olmsted added that if a Catholic "formally cooperates" in an abortion, he or she is automatically excommunicated.

Neither the hospital nor the bishop's office would say if Olmsted had a direct role in her dismissal. He does not have control of the hospital or a business that is the **order of moral authority over any** Catholic institution operating in the diocese.

The patient, who hasn't been identified, was seriously ill with pulmonary hypertension. The condition limits the ability of the heart and lungs to function and it leads worse, possibly even fatal, by pregnancy.

"This decision was made after consultation with the patient, her family, her physicians, and in consultation with the ethics committee, of which St. Margaret Mehlhaff is a member," the hospital said. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Cathay plane escorted to Vancouver

VANCOUVER—A Cathay Pacific airliner from Hong Kong was escorted by military fighter jets to its destination in Vancouver, Canada, after what the airline called a "bomb hoax." But no bomb was found, police said on Saturday. Police searched the aircraft and luggage after the flight landed at Vancouver International Airport, but "nothing of concern" was found and there was no danger to passengers, according to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Two Canadian CF-18 Hornets were scrambled from a military base on nearby Vancouver Island to escort the Cathay Pacific Airways plane to its openness to the threat, according to police and the Hong Kong-based airline. Reuters

Episcopal Church ordains its 2nd openly gay bishop

LONG BEACH, California—Seven years after the Episcopal Church caused an uproar by consecrating its first openly gay bishop, it has done the same thing again—only this time with a woman. The Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool, of Baltimore, was ordained and consecrated on Saturday, making her the second openly gay bishop in church history and one of the first two female bishops in the diocese of Los Angeles' 114-year history. Just before the ceremony began, a man stood, shouted about the need to repent and held up a sign that read "Do not be deceived. Homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God." AP

GLASSPOOL

Giant plumes of oil forming under the Gulf

SCIENTISTS are finding enormous oil plumes in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, including one as large as 10 miles long, three miles wide and 300 feet thick. The discovery is fresh evidence that the leak from the broken undersea well could be substantially worse than estimates that the government and BP have given. "There's a shocking amount of oil in the deep water. I believe in what you see in the surface water," said Samantha Joye, a researcher at the University of Georgia who is involved in one of the first scientific missions to gather details about what is happening in the Gulf. "There's a tremendous amount of oil in multiple layers, three or four or five layers deep in the water column." The plumes are depleting the oxygen dissolved in the Gulf, worrying scientists, who fear that the oxygen level could eventually fall so low as to kill off much of the wildlife near the plumes. NYT

Australia hails teen sailor as newest national hero

SYDNEY—Teenage sailor Jessica Watson was on Sunday feted as Australia's newest hero as she enjoyed her first sleep in 4 months, one day after becoming the youngest person to sail solo, unassisted and nonstop around the world. Watson sailed into Sydney Harbor on Saturday before a crowd of tens of thousands who had come to welcome the 16-year-old home from the unassisted voyage during which she had her 16th birthday at sea and capsized. The 5-foot-6 sailor said the nation was riding a "wave of inspiration" after Watson brought her 10-meter (33-foot) yacht safely home after 210 days at sea. AFP

WATSON

INQUIRER mobile news

INQUIRER BREAKING NEWS: Two separate vehicular accidents, a few minutes apart, cause traffic jam along southbound lane of C-5 in Pasig City, says Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

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Edited by Lorena B. Gaoiran

The WORLD

S. Korea fires warning shots at N. Korea ships

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREA'S NAVY has fired warning shots to drive away North Korean patrol boats from the disputed inter-Korean sea border, amid tension over the sinking of a Seoul warship, officials said on Sunday.

The warning shots were fired late Saturday when two North Korean patrol boats violated the Northern Limit Line (NLL) border and strayed into South Korean waters, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff office said.

A spokesperson for the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff told AFP the North's patrol boats retreated minutes responding to the fire. No casualties occurred.

It is the first time that shots have been fired at the inter-Korean border since the mystery sinking of a South Korean warship on March 26 in the region.

Suspicions have since been growing that a North Korean torpedo downed the warship, killing 46 South Korean sailors.

The sinking incident was discussed at the weekend talks between foreign ministers from South Korea, Japan and China in a southern city of Gyeongju.

Minister Yang Jiechi of China, the North's sole major ally and economic lifeline, joined his South Korean and Japanese counterparts in expressing sympathy over the heavy toll of life, according to a joint statement.

"We expressed our condolences for the loss of many lives due to the sinking of the (South Korean) Navy ship Cheonan on March 26," the statement said.

A multinational investigation is to report by Thursday, and Seoul is weighing its diplomatic and economic options if the North—which denies involvement—is found to have sunk the cruiser.

China is the North's sole major ally and its economic lifeline. As a veto-wielding member, its backing would be crucial if the South takes the matter to the United Nations Security Council.

Baek Seung-Joo, an analyst at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses in Seoul, told AFP the South's latest breach of the sea border aimed to cement its territorial claims ahead of the annual season to fish crabs.

"The North is saying that tension caused by the Cheonan incident does not affect its policy of seeking mutually the NLL in the Yellow Sea," Baek said. "Especially when the June crab-catching season is just around the corner." The Joint Chiefs of Staff office said one North Korean patrol boat crossed into South Korean waters near Yeongpung island at 10:15 p.m. on Saturday and retreated after a radio warning from the South.

A second North Korean patrol boat violated the border in the same area 47 minutes later, ignored a radio warning from the South and sailed north only after warning shots were fired from the South, it said.

The area was the scene of deadly naval clashes in 1999 and 2002, and of a firefight last November which saw a North Korean patrol boat abirun.

The North has never recognised the NLL border drawn by the US-led United Nations Command after the 1950-1953 Korean war ended in an armistice. But the South has maintained it as a de facto inter-Korean border. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
- **Orcollo** gains semis; Gomez duels Souquet /A30

SPORTS
Editor Tobbinic S. Melendrez
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

- **Superal** nails first int'l win in India /A31

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Grieving Lady Pirates stun Tigresses in five

By Jasmine W. Paz

A MOURNING UNIFORM SQUAD PLAYED with a heavy but big fighting heart.

Propelled by their top trio, the Lady Pirates brought down the defending champion Ateneo Tigresses, 20-22, 23-13, 23-22, 23-21, 15-13, to share Game 1 of their best-of-three semifinal duel yesterday in the Shakey's V-League Season 7 at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig.

But not Mandy Mamaug, rookie coach of Lyceum's offense in the final set to finish with a game-high 10 points as the Lady Pirates beat the Tigresses for the first time in 11 meetings since the league's inaugural season in 2004.

Nene Goltiman, who recorded six blocks, and Joy Cases helped the Lady Pirates recover their bearing in the last two frames to wind up with

STORY, A-28

LYCEUM'S Thai reinforcement Parinda Kaewkong hammers one in off LSU's Rosa Dhona alleges in yesterday's game.

SSC rips Ateneo in other semis tiff

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Crack RP guard to miss Fiba Asia Champions Cup

By Jane Navarro

MARCIO LASSITER, THE GUARD, CALIFORNIA-based Filipino ruger, has joined one playmaker, JV Casio, in the long roosting store for the backcourt rotation of the Smart Gilas Philippines for the Fiba Asia Champions Cup.

Smart Gilas conditioning coach Jimbo Saret confirmed yesterday that Lassiter suffered a contusion on his right knee during the squad's training camp in the United States two weeks ago and will miss the May 21 to 30 tournament in Doha, Qatar.

Saret said Lassiter will be out for one month. Casio was earlier sidelined by a left knee MCL sprain following the RP team's training stint in Serbia.

Gilas skipper Chris Tiu said in separate Manila interviews on Sunday. Tiu has a recurring strain in his quadriceps while Barroca is still bothered by back spasms.

Both promised, though, to play through the pain to the Asian club championships where two imports are allowed for each team.

Without Casio and Lassiter, Serbian coach Rajko Toroman will have to tap utility guards RJ Jazul and JR Cruzeiro as backstop for Tiu and Barroca.

"We were complete last year, so it will be really difficult for us," said Toroman, whose team finished fifth in the same tournament in Abu Dhabi last year.

"But we will not let those bother us. Our focus is to play better, give our best."

Toroman also said that Serbian import Miles Ventovic, who joined the team last week, has yet to adjust to his system.

"He is bothered by the time [to] he needs to get used to it if he wants to stay with the team," said Toroman of the 6-10 Undersix.

Seven-footer Greg Slaughter is expected to help Undersix in the paint along with Japeth Aguilar, Asi Taulava, Ranidel de Ocampo, Andreas Cuntapay, Aldrech Ramos, Japeth Aguilar and Ilsubeh Al-Hussaini.

LASSITER: Injured

Orcollo gains semis; Gomez duels Souquet

HANNES ORCOLLO TURNED BACK CANADian John Hawa, 8-3, yesterday to barge into the semifinals of the Party Poker World Pool Masters at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Orcollo, regarded by his Filipino peers as the king of the nursery game, swept to an early 4-0 lead en route to victory in the $300,000 tournament.

"I got off to a good start," Orcollo said in Filipino. "It's hard to play catch-up in this format because the winner gets to break and it's only a race to 8."

Orcollo would be headed for a showdown with Bugoy Pramodena unbeliever Roberto Gomez, who will square off with Ralf Souquet of Germany in the quarterfinals.

"I hope Robert wins so that at the very least, we can be two of a Filipino in the finals," said Orcollo.

Gomez reached the quarterfinals by stopping 2007 World Pool Billiards Japan Shara, 8-3. Souquet, booked his ticket with an 8-6 win over Australian Raymond Heatherington.

"Souquet is a tough opponent but I'll do my best to win," said Gomez, a former field reporter for a news organization before becoming an ball chaser pro.

Orcollo and Gomez are the only Filipinos still in contention in the tournament.

Ted Ingersoll, Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Ronnie Alcano and Warren Kiamco all bowed out in the earlier stages of the tournament.

Charlie Williams of the United States and Tom Reidhaupttel of Japan booted their respective rivals to emerge a quarterfinal duel.

Williams ousted Satoshi Ozoe of Japan, 8-5, while Reidhaupttel blasted Daryl Peach of Britain, 8-0.

Thorsten Engert of Germany ousted Americans Rodney Morris, 8-3, to seal a quarterfinal date with compatriot Oliver Ortmann, who nipped Thorsten Hohmann, 8-6.

Steve Stiles, Scott Baxter

DEFENSE: Orcollo shoots for a berth in the championship match against either compatriot Roberto Gomez or German Ralf Souquet.

Still no crown yet for King James

ONE GAME AT A TIME

Jer Lorenzo

THERE IS something odd about individual awards in team sports.

The Most Valuable Player in any basketball league is supposed to be the team mates, the all mighty performers who is supposed to bring a team to the Promised Land: known as a championship.

Because of his or her all around individual gifts, there should be no doubt that the MVP can propel any team to a title.

* * *

That's why when season MVP LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers failed to turn back the Boston Celtics in the NBA Eastern Conference semifinals, Filipino fans began to whimper. "Wala daw si LeBron (LeBron is nothing)."

The statements, no doubt, stemmed from King James' failure to win a crown despite his truly awesome individual skills.

The comments are interesting but rather unfair.

See one thing, Boston simply played better team ball. The superb two-play of guard Rajon Rondo came at the right time in the series to complement the big Three of Ray Allen, Kevin Garnett and Paul Pierce.

Calling them the Fantastic Four seem to evoke memories of some cyberband Celtic followers.

* * *

The Cavs could not match the skill of the series's MVP. Rondo's MVP skills could not run a bank the Green Wave that engulfed Games Four to Six.

And, let's face it. James is just not cut in a game anchored on teamwork.

So did the Cavs showed less teamwork than the Celtics? Not at all.

It's just that when a game that is dismal by tempo and momentum, the bear simply wore the Celtics' way. They were more in tune and the Cavs could not keep in step.

* * *

The career of LeBron James could go in either of two ways.

One, he will settle in a title zone day when another good center and a reliable forward comes his way not necessarily in Cleveland.

Second, he could end up with no title at all, joining the likes of Charles Barkley, Karl Malone and John Stockton as truly great stars who never won a title.

It will be fun to see the second category, it will in no way diminish his future as one of the truly great players of the game.

* * *

Even the great Michael Jordan had to wait for the arrival of Scottie Pippen, sufficient passing options like Luc Longley and a complete offense to achieve his six NBA titles.

If Jordan didn't win an NBA title, he would have a monkey on his back. But it wouldn't diminish our appreciation of his skills.

Will James ever win one?

The probability is quite high. It just depends on where he ends up and if he gets to work with a general manager skilled enough to get King James the players that will help him wear a crown.

TOLENTINO: Bojays t/O support.

No UCI cards, no Asiad for cyclists

By Jane Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE WILL not field in cycling races in the Asian Games unless it has the blessings of the Union Cycliste Internationale.

Israel Borbe de Asterio, key lieutenants made it clear yesterday that the foreground Cycling Federation of the Philippines (PhilCycling) should be responsible for securing the UCI license of its riders and technical staff.

The country's 13-man team in the last Incheonat Asian Games in Laos failed to secure its license the POC-recognized PhilCycling body, which is not recognized by the UCI, had no licenses from the international body.

The UCI bares competition licenses only to cyclists fielded by the PhilCycling group of Tagaytay Mayor Agnes Barrios. Borbe de Asterio, who is a registrant on the legitimate head of the country's cycling body.

Hammond has canvassed Avendaño, secretary general of the rival PhilCycling bloc, to hold meetings with the UCI so it can obtain proper accreditation.

"If PhilCycling officials are really concerned about their athletes, they should start doing it to obtain UCI licenses now," said Hammond.

The POC spokesperson also pointed out that the UCI licenses should be ready before the Olympic body submits the final roster of athletes to the Guangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee on Sept. 30.

The Guangzhou Asiad is scheduled Nov. 12-27 with the POC hoping to see action in 30 of the 42 sports calendared in the Games.

Fresh focus in Pinoy-only nat'l trackfest

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BUENAVENTURA

THE PHILIPPINE AMateur Track and Field Association will run separate meetings on lapping varsity meddlers and long-distance runners in the all-Filipino National Open on May 21 to 25 at the Rizal Memorial Track-Football Stadium.

With Edlamlo Buenaventura and his peers in the ranks of their current, athletics chief Go Teng Kok said the country needs to develop new talents in the middle- and long-distance races because these are where Filipinos have a fighting chance for medals in the Asian Games.

"In these events, height and built are not really factors," said Go. "The only requirements are endurance and a fighting heart."

Due to financial constraints, Go said no foreign invitations were sent out this time, although overseas talent willing to shoulder the cost of competing at the Open are welcome.

Collegiate runners and Palarong Pambansa athletes are expected to compete in the three-day event.

The Palaro standouts include Vanessa del Valle and Nicholson Cepeda of Calabarzon, Bernard Dang of Region 12, Jessie Valenzuela of Region 6 and Jomo Caido of Region 1.

Del Valle prevailed in the secondary girls' 1,000 meters and 1,500m while Cepeda topped the boys' 1,500m and 5,000m.

Dang won the secondary boys' 3,000m steeplechase during Watchers topped the boys' 800m and Caido rounded out the list in the girls' 800m.

The country last won an individual title gold in 1985, when Lydia de Vega ruled the 100m dash in Seoul.

Jaworski as next PSC chair?

CLEAN LIVING

Hermilo B. Pelayo

MANY SPORTS FANS ARE HOPING that the incoming administration designates former Sen. Robert Jaworski as new chair of the Philippine Sports Commission because they would help form a better relationship between the PSC and the Philippine Olympic Committee.

They say the 66-year-old Jaworski, the most popular basketball player of his generation, fits the PSC positions as a "I-Sir"s a reported and devoted supporter of sports, a former Olympian, twenty-nine-member of several basketball champion teams in the Senate Congress and former playing coach of several clubs in the league Gilebo at the Philippine Basketball Association.

"Mr. Jaworski is the best and most ideal choice for the position of PSC chair," said one sports diehard, "with him in the government sports agency, the perennial PSC-POC rift is expected to be resolved. His passion for sports certainly outweighs his ego."

I haven't touched base with Mr. Jaworski to get his reaction.

* * *

For the record, Jaworski's son, Jaclin, is married to champion equestrienne Aileen Gatmaitan, daughter of POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr.

Knowledgeable quarters say that, basically, he would very well put an end to the long-running animosity between the two sports bodies.

Jaworski as an Olympian, a basketball player and a coach has been involved in sports because it's deeply responsible in making Gilas a world-beater today.

He also said that Gilas must chased the other to the outside world and continued rigorous training to improve its sports program with the help of its national sports associations. Chinese coaches Brandley selected their athletes from among hundreds of aspirants, identifying those with potentials and training them to become world-class athletes.

"Now Gilas is an acknowledged world power not only in sports but in other aspects as well," added the Big J as he is also known in sports circles.

* * *

With the opening of this year's ASAP basketball season just around the corner, many are suggesting that basketball La Salle become beloved homes to the members of its championship team that won the first season MCGI in the country in 1990.

Late it better than never. Members of that undergraduate Green Archers team were Tito Sobejana, team captain, Eddie Ocampo, Carlos "Tani" Magat, Jose Almedilla, Gabby Ramos, Dionisio Isidro, Jesus Jr., unused, Addie Sharruff, Hugo was Several, Jose Castillejo, Albert Bonoan and Tony Kanapen. Their coach was Honesto "Chito" Calvo, remembered as the "father of Philippine basketball."

Grieving Lady Pirates stun Tigresses

From page A29

17 points each.

The Lady Stags' breakthrough win—which pushed the back-to-back champion Tigresses on the brink of elimination—came three days after the death of Cayetano "Tanny" Gonzales, Lyceum's team manager and athletic director.

"We were all surprised [with Gonzales' death] and we're all hurting," coach Jimel Lorenzo said in Filipino. "But I reminded the players that it shouldn't be a reason for us not to play well."

San Sebastian pounded out a straight-set victory, 25-23, 25-14, 25-16, against an Ateneo squad playing minus team ace Chaya Soliano in the other semifinal match.

The import Jamesiel Ibanke fired 20 points and Joy Benitez delivered the match point to finish with 18 points for the Lady Stags.

"We knew they're psychologically down; they're affected by the absence of Chaya," said San Sebastian coach Roger Gonzales.

Soliano watched from the Ateneo sidelines in crutches after tearing her right anterior cruciate (knee) ligament in Thursday's game.

Lyceum and San Sebastian will duke for finals berths in Game 2 on Tuesday.

The Lady Pirates wore black wristbands as a tribute to Gonzales, a volunteer benefit figure who died last Thursday due to a heart attack. He was 58.

But the Lady Pirates kept their composure in check as Dimaliw, Cuevo and Gollayan spearheaded a Lyceum breakaway from a 6-6 deadlock in the deciding set.

Dimaliw, who registered seven service aces, rattled San Sebastian hills as servings up the game with a two-foot match.

A pair of Dimaliw hills also sandwiched a Jovie Alarcon hit to cap the fourth set, 25-23, and forge a decider.

Ana Mahilo, the reigning MVP led the Tigresses with 26 points.

ASIA-PACIFIC JUNGOLF TILT

Superal nails first int'l win in India

PRINCESS SUPERAL rattled her mother-in-law Wendy after her first stroke of 73-74, finished with a 2-under tally for a three-shot win over Thailand's Pitaliti Laosirikul today.

Apollo Uhaw was the only Filipino in eight place, with South Korea and Marc Macedo winding up 35th and 22nd, respectively.

Superal, playing out of Orchard and supported by Mighty Sports, actually finished fourth overall, but 4th off the pace.

"Princess showed the heart of a champion in the final round, she just didn't want to lose," said delegation head Gerry Rimando, chair of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, Edit of Venice and current leading pace setter Jeremy Bacon resting action in the finishing of the ICTSI Junior Golf Summer Circuit, which will be co-hosted by the Casitahong and Riviera country resorts.

The 2+4 hole tournament will have the sons of Miss Peace Egert, Carolan Canto (JR), Eddie Regala (Lourdes) and Bryett Zaragoza (Bryett) competing with Annika, daughter of rising guru Jose Cecilio.

Bryett, who at 12 is already a PBL Junior lab competitor, is the favorite to top Class C.

Leandro checks for a second win after scoring a number win last week at Sherwood Hills.

Some of the country's representatives to the Junior World championships in San Diego, California this July are among the 100 or so players competing in this events, divided competitions for boys and girls. Rhoeng R. Cuadito

PRINCESS Superal tees her putt in a recent leg of the ICTSI summer circuit.

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Alabang, S. Elena seal Fed League finals duel

ALABANG BOYS' HAMLA SOUTH rounds in a playoff while fourth-ranked Sta. Rosa claimed top-seeded Tagaytay Highlands in the semifinals of the 2010 Ladies Professional League in extraordinary extremely.

Gideon Hayden and Ui Mendoza delivered the big victory for Alabang, edging the Manila Southwoods pair of Johnston Lim-Claire Ong on the second playoff hole of a gruesome format after both teams had ended their home-and-away series in a 9-9 deadlock.

Sta. Elena scored a 3-1 victory at home and then earned a spot-blinds round by Highlands to secure a 5.5-3.5 decision and earn a trip to the series this week.

The Tagaytay-based Sta. Elena squad headed on Erika Medina and Gretchen Reyes's 1-up win in high low and a draw salvaged by Che Yeni Leung and Shiny Morales in best ball as their rate to Highlands to pursue the victory.

Alabang and Sta. Elena clash on Thursday and Friday with the winner succeeding Orchard in league champion. Orchard failed to advance to the Final Four.

Handing and Mendoza outwill the semifinal tie for Alabang after they rallied from three down to beat Cecilio Bonifacio and Ron Gonzales, 3 and 2, for their team's only win at Southwoods.

A day earlier, Alabang went up 3-1 at home and Southwoods won by the same score to force the playoff.

14 pace 8-bullstag derby at SJC

EIGHTEEN QUALIFIERS SPUR THE PARTY'S first Arizona such as the PBA million SJC Resolute 8-Bullstag Derby, which resumes today at San Juan Coliseum with some 100 fights on tap.

Bianca Engr.'s Master Standout, with his entry Silver Fear 2, and Montalvo's Bulldog Spectator Motorsports crossed the finish line first after posting 4-0 win-loss double last Saturday, according to SJC Resolute Inspectorate Arnel Garcello.

Jerry Cascabel Bicols of Lucena and Ben de Jesus Automotive Corp (DMC Pontiac Indian) 3.5 points each.

The last three fight days are May 23 and 24.

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Federer, Nadal reach Madrid Masters final

MADRID—ROGER FEDERER (NO. 2) BEAT RAFAEL NADAL (NO. 6) 7-5, 3-6, 6-3, on Saturday (Sunday) to reach the final of the Madrid Masters tournament. Federer, who won the Spanish clay-court title in 2003 and 2004, will play Tommy Robredo in the final. Nadal won the Madrid title in 2005 and 2006. Federer, who won the Australian Open in January, is bidding to win his first Masters Series title on clay. He has reached the final of the French Open twice but lost to Nadal both times. Nadal will be bidding to win his second Masters Series title of the year after winning in Monte Carlo. AP

SPORTS

Lookin At Lucky wins Preakness

BALTIMORE—BARRY M. GARCIA (TORO) LOOKIN AT LUCKY (5) WINS by three-quarters of a length over First Dude on Saturday, giving trainer Bob Baffert his fifth Preakness win. The 23-year-old Garcia, in only his second ride at the meet, beat veteran Calvin Borel, who had guided Lucky's Triple Crown nemesis after him until Super Saver won this Kentucky Derby runner-up. The odds-favorite outfought Lucky in the 1-1/2 home hill. AP

Rosales 9 off Bell leaders

MOBILE, ALABAMA—(12) Jeff Fenoy, Brittany Lincicome and Jo Ha Pak head into the final round of the Bell Micro LPGA Classic tied atop the leaderboard at 11-under.

Fenoy got back on eagle on the par-5 No. 6 on Saturday to help her catch up with second-round leader Pak and share a 7-under 65 on the Crossings Course at Magnolia Grove, part of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail.

The Philippines' Jennifer Rosales carded a 68 to be 10 off the pace at 212, tied with nine others at 10th spot.

Fil-American Dorothy Delasin earlier missed the cut after rounds of 78-78. AP

Celts, Magic begin duel

Boston has 17 NBA titles; Orlando still seeking first

ORLANDO, Fla.—PUMPED on the court in his living room, Stan Van Gundy was watching Boston blow past Cleveland in the Eastern Conference semifinals and thought it was some sort of replay from the Celtics' 2008 NBA title run.

There were the familiar names, Rondo, Garnett pounding his chest, Ray Allen swishing 3-pointers and Paul Pierce posing for the camera.

"If you look at them, that's the (same) team," Van Gundy said. "What would be the difference?"

Turning back the clock to make another title run, the youngest Celtics are healthy again and looking to take down the playoff-perfect Orlando Magic starting Sunday in an Eastern Conference finals pitting the past two conference champions.

The Celtics, with 17 NBA titles and retired stars in Larry Bird and Bill Russell keeping watch from the rafters, want to add to their lore. The favored Orlando wants to finally re-write its first NBA championship.

"Orlando won the regular season, so they took the season (about 41) you wanted to get out of the first round. You had to beat Orlando," Celtics coach Doc Rivers said.

Magic, spurned by last year's 3804 Rondo loss, swept through the first two rounds and have won 14 straight going back to the regular season.

"If we want to take the series, we have to do all the things we did in the first two series," Orlando's Dwight Howard said. "And if we do that, we should take this series but we all have to believe that." AP

FANS line up at the Amway Arena ticket booth to buy tickets to the Eastern Conference finals between the Boston Celtics and Orlando Magic. A lottery was held to determine position in line. AP

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Clavecilla eyes 6th Seniors plum

JOEY CLAVECILLA EYES A RECORD FIFTH prize as the country's leading golfing senior dog it out for top honors in the Philippine Senior Amateur Golf Championship set for 7 to 9 at the Mt. Whitetop Golf and Country Club in Lipa City.

Clavecilla is notably gunning for his ninth SP Seniors Am title since 2003. The top Luzon contender is expected to have his hands full in the competition Open division against former champions Pericle Gomez (2006) and Rolly Sicat (2004).

Also on top in the three-day tournament for golfers 50 years old and above are competitors in Category II (60-64), Category III (65-69), Super Senior I (70-74) and Super Senior II (75 and above). Up for grabs in the age group competitions, to be played over 36 holes on July 7 and 8, are the gross and net titles.

Registration is ongoing with fees pegged at P5,500 (Open) for local resorters and P80 for foreign participants, and P2,200 and $65 in age group divisions. Invitation of amateurs round on July 6.

For more details, call SGAP at 5359576 and 5357848 or send an e-mail to sgapgolf@hotmail.com.

URCC bets shine in Singapore tilt

UNIVERSAL REALITY COMBAT CHAMPIONship (URCC) fighters Kevin Belingon and Jakob Fuke conclusive their rivals in the first Asian Martial Combat held recently at the Resorts World in Sentosa, Singapore.

Fuke, a blue belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, needed just four minutes in the first round to convince Chino's Yang "The Pugilist" Fei via referee stopped contest. A left hook sent the Chinese down to the canvas and Fuke wasted no time landing heavy blows. Australian referee Steve Steward is left the match.

Belingon, fighting in the flyweight division, was equally impressive in his disjointed Thai figure "The Indestructible" Dittyo in 2:31 of the first round.

Meanwhile, Philippines-born Ms Angela Lanyon, who grew up in Denmark, stopped Brazilian Eduardo Pacha in the lightweight super fight by scoring a rear naked choke in the third round.

Abap Luzon youth slugfest on

THE AMATEUR BOXING ASSOCIATION of the Philippines launched its talent discovery program yesterday with the staging of the PGTAbap Luzon boxing championship at the Subic Gym.

Abap president Ricky Vargas said the Luzon leg would be the first of four area tournaments to be organized in the archipelago with the thrust of the Amateur Boxing Association (Abba) to hold more competitions for the youth.

"The Abba has been staging more competitions involving the youth and we, at Abap, are determined to join along just in these tournaments," said Vargas during the opening rites of the tournament which is said at least 200 young boxers.

After the Luzon leg, Abap will organize other area tournaments in the Visayas (Mandaue City), Mindanao (Davao-del) and National Capital Region.

The top boxers from all four legs will figure in the national champs ratings.

"We're still in the planning stages but we are definitely considering these locations," said Abap executive director Ed Picson.

Abap secretary general Patrick Gregorio said negotiations for the venue of the National Amateur Boxing Championship are ongoing, with Cagayan De Oro making the initial bid.

Rhenzie Cabonilas completed the coaching staff of the Philippine Air Force-Iron Thunderbirds, and Sergio... Jose Mesosa

Nguyen, Villamor top Juntaphil

THEIRA WOUND COMPLETED HER backto-back romp to the 16-under division while Alberto Villamor sulted in the boys' title at the close of the Okada Juntaphil Cup at the Manila Polo Club yesterday.

Nguyen recovered from a second set meltdown to upend No. 2 Jasmine Tan 8-6, 6-2, 6-0, 6-4, and bag the premier division of the Group 3 tournament presented by Okada Sweets and Pizza Gen Corp. and sponsored by Smart Communications.

The 15-year-old daughter of former national team mainstay Rhea Oliveros also raked in the First Gen Metro Open last week.

Villamor, meanwhile, lived up to his billing with a 6-1, 6-3 win over Arshad Bhanada.

Sharing the spotlight was 9-year-old Frances Jauregui, who steamed second seed Michael Eala, 6-4, 6-1, in the 10-under centers division championship.

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Biz Buzz:**
SM sports arena /B4

■ **DOF seeks abolition**
of losing state firms /B10

Editor Raul C. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

Strong peso to stall exports recovery

Group says exchange rate should rise to 46:$1

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EXPORT SECTOR MAY NOT BE ABLE TO bounce back to its pre-crisis level by the second half of the year, as earlier projected, if the peso continues to strengthen against the dollar, according to the Philippine Exporters Confederation.

Philexport president Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr. said that instead of recovering this year, the industry could only go back to where it was prior to the 2008 crisis by next year, at the earliest.

Even with the increasingly strengthening performance of semiconductor and electronics, the country's biggest export-dollar earner, he said the sector could still suffer as the strong peso adversely affected indigenous exporters.

He noted that indigenous exporters, most of them small and medium enterprises, had planned to rebuke and resurrect the firm activities this year in anticipation of more orders.

However, he said the strong peso has made it difficult for these exporters to remain viable or they could not raise prices even with the resolution of their woes.

"They can't raise their prices because they won't be competitive," he said, adding that many of them had stopped taking orders to keep from selling at a loss.

He said the export sector was hoping that the exchange rate would improve soon so indigenous exporters could start re-hiring people and reestablishing their operations.

"Otherwise, we will end up exporting the usual import-dependent exports with low value-added," he said.

The critical foreign exchange level for indigenous exporters, he said, was P46 to a dollar, as lower. Bigger exporters such as those in the electronics and semiconductor sector, however, could take an exchange rate of up to P48 to a greenback.

The peso-dollar exchange rate was at 44.70:$1 at the close of the Philippine Dealing System last Friday.

Exports during the first quarter, on the other hand, surged 42.8 percent to $11.35 billion from $7.93 billion in the same period a year ago, according to data from the National Statistics Office.

This year, Ortiz-Luis said the export sector was not expected to grow beyond 10-15 percent.

STRONG B2

Strong peso to stall exports . . .

From page B1

Exports have been posting double-digit growth rates this year due mainly to the low base in 2009, when outbound shipments slumped as a result of the US-induced global economic recession, investment dollars from the country's traditional markets went as the recovery in their economies has been somewhat slow to date.

need a job?

I COULD SEE FROM THE VOLUME of mail preceded by my recent article on traffic that this is one public policy issue that must assume high priority with the incoming leaders of the country from the President down to municipal officials.

As one letter writer put it aptly: "I do believe that once we put order on the streets, we can also put order not only in our lives, but in our livelihood and economy as well." As unsuccessful senatorial candidate Alex Lacson cited: I am disappointed that he didn't elaborate more in his best-selling book 12 Little Things Every Filipino Can Do to Help the Country, traffic paints a picture of our nation and our people. And speaking of unsuccessful candidates, that is one concern that I know supporters of Gilbert Teodoro (pictured) had in their minds, given their respective track records on instilling order in the streets in Olongapo, Subic and Makkina. Since they didn't make it (don't get me wrong; many know that I supported Eddie Villanueva), another concern (Manny Villar) will lose me to highlight advice that readers have volunteered on the issue, which the successful candidates would hopefully take to heart.

Enforcement is key

Most of the readers who wrote in agree that strict, effective and consistent enforcement is central to restructuring the chaos on our streets. That is why Filipino motorists drastically obey traffic rules when abroad. But readers point out that we don't have to look far; memories are also obedient to Subic, Clark and Puerto Princesa. This led one and should expand; local leaders simply need to give traffic enforcement the priority it demands. This in turn requires proper discipline, especially given the likelihood that many traffic enforcers are nonetheless themselves.

A reader prefers to see traffic enforcement done by the Philippine National Police (PNP) through a strengthened Traffic Group with well-trained members. He asserts: "I personally abhor the idea of being apprehended by a Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) traffic enforcer when I know that he/she was a former menor-de-edad (teenager) who does not fully understand traffic laws." But this highlights an underlying problem with traffic management. It is not clear who really is accountable.

Who is responsible?

A few years ago, I wrote of a taxi-ride experience where PNP officers sitting in their outpost simply watched idly as traffic locked up along the national road in Calamba, Laguna. When I alighted from my vehicle to politely ask them why they were not helping, a (they confidentially replied that it was not their duty but that of the Land Transport Management Office (LTMO) to manage the traffic. And of course, no LTMO agent was in sight.

Then we overlap, whose responsibility is it really? If it's not the police, it is really the LTMO? Or is it the local government? The MMDA (in Metro Manila)? Some readers would like to see the government designate a traffic czar or zars who will focus on this problem and be empowered to enforce it. I suggest from all the relevant units of government to address traffic management from top to bottom.

Hardware solutions

All the above government solutions will need complementary software. Many readers also offered a wealth of technical and engineering solutions, some of them specific to certain road sections and intersections which spare enumeration prevent me here sharing. Some question why the government allows too many buses to ply the Edsa route, when you see many of them half-filled even at rush hours. A good number of readers assert that the ultimate solution is an effective mass transport system mainly based on rail transport. Some ask, wouldn't an efficient commuter rail line up to Calamba, Laguna have made more sense than the dry may extension? Why can't the existing LRT/MRT lines in Metro Manila be extended by just 1-2 more stations for a more seamless link (e.g., the Edsa MRT line to Nichan Boulevard, and Buendia/Ayala Mercantile to join up with LRT 1) or to link with other transport modes (e.g., to the airport terminals)?

I have long wondered why the government can't dedicate a couple of helicopters to daily monitoring of traffic flows and daily problems that traffic enforcers can focus on the corresponding unclogging work on the ground. Many of us often endure crawling traffic only to end up saying "Pero kung pala dahilan e!" (So that was all there is to it!) upon discovering that the cause of our misery was all so unnecessary if only traffic enforcers were doing their jobs at the choke points.

Citizen action

Some readers rightly assert that the traffic problem requires the joint efforts of all, and cannot be left entirely to government. Some actually wrote in volunteer to join any citizen organizations working on the issue. A reader called attention to Rotary Wee Hi Yee, a community outreach project in partnership between Philippine Rotary Clubs and the PNP, with traffic management being a dominant concern. We need more of such volunteer organizations to help us to a problem that requires collective efforts from motorists, pedestrians and the general citizenry, apart from the new government adopting a hands-on Bayani-style approach to our long-standing and very costly traffic problem.

Comments inclusive of cholitoi@hotmail.com

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Cautious trading seen

From page B1

Philippine Stock Exchange index ended 5.09 percent to 3,330.42 as readers cheered the success of the country's first automated elections and a 13-trillion anti-corruption package proposed for the Aquino administration.

On Friday, however, the closely watched Dow Jones Industrial index was down by another 162.79 points or 1.51 percent, while the Nasdaq and S&P 500 indices fell 1.38 percent and 1.46 percent, respectively.

Renewed concerns over the impact of the EU-trillion bailout fund for individual economies as well as the true extent of the economic woes of countries in the region, such as Greece, Portugal and Spain have again crept into investor consciousness, BPI Investities said.

It said the market might succumb to profit taking in the coming days, adding that "recent performance by the index has not shown positive last strength."

AB Capital Securities analyst Prince Anthony Yeung said that despite all the positive factors surrounding the market, he was not sure that the local market could contain the upswing in the coming weeks.

"The situation surrounding Greece and the other European countries are not yet over and China's concern that its economy may be overheating is not keeping us up-to-on," Yeung said.

But Yeung noted that several stocks have recently shown indications where the offline—may perform well whether the PSEi goes up or down. For instance, he said Energy Development Corp. and Aboitiz Power Corp. were set to enjoy record breaking, profits this year. Meralco, Pepsi-Cola Products and Manila Water Co., were seen as attractive defensive stocks in the market today.

"There are also stocks that are really undervalued that they are set to move higher in the next few days, particularly the retail, food and property development stocks that trade regularly," Yeung said.

"The property sector will continue to benefit from low levels of interest rate but a bigger factor will be the BUY (Real Estate Investment Trust) law," he said.

As first-quarter earnings have started pouring in, Yeung noted that most companies have reported growth during the period. But among those that recorded expectations, he noted, were SM Investments, Ayala, Ayala Land, Inc. and Del Monte Philippines.

Bevis C. Bustillo

SMC unit seen taking over Ilijan IPPA ...

From page B1

third to be bagged by the San Miguel group. It also won the bidding for the contracts to manage the 1,200-MW Sual coal-fired plant and the 345-MW San Roque multipurpose hydroelectric facility through subsidiary Strategic Power Development Corp.). Read San Roque and Sual power plants are in Pangasinan province.

Completed in 2002, the Ilijan power plant is operated by Korea Electric Power Co. (Kepco) through a build-operate-transfer contract that will expire in 2022. The facility draws natural gas from Shell Exploration BV's Malampaya deep water gas-to-power project.

Group pushes copyright law passage

By Abigail L. Ho

LESS THAN TWO MONTHS BEFORE the declaration of a new president, the Business Software Alliance is stepping its push to have in place a copyright law to strengthen the protection of intellectual property in the country in effect encouraging more investments to come in.

BSA consultant for the Philippines Bienvenido Marquez III said that having a strong law in place would allow the country to keep pace with recent technological developments that never run counter to existing IP laws.

Last year, the group sent a position paper to Congress in support of the passage of a copyright law. This, however, remained pending in the legislature.

With the country about to get a new set of legislators, he said the BSA would continue to push for the passage of stronger IP protection laws.

Apart from wanting to modernize copyright protection in the country, BSA also sought the full implementation of various World Intellectual Property Office treaties, including the Wipo Internet Treaties, Wipo Copyright Treaty and Wipo Performances and Phonograms Treaty.

"The prompt ratification of the treaties is necessary to ensure that copyright holders have a legal foundation that is sufficiently strong to encourage them to distribute their works over electronic networks. Faithful implementation of this treaty will also give rightholders a strong legal basis, worldwide, for fighting Internet piracy." the group's outlet said in its position paper.

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SM sports arena

ARE YOU TIRED OF SWAYING [illegible] sports venues with rickety bleachers, weak air-conditioning and insufficient parking spaces just to watch your favorite basketball game?

This could be the answer to your woes. The SM group is building a new sports venue adjacent to its Mall of Asia complex on the Manila Bay reclamation area that will rival the nearby Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and the Cuneta Astrodome in size.

But more importantly, the new facility will have all the trappings of a modern indoor venue inspired by facilities in the Glorietta district.

According to our sources, the privately owned sports arena will have a seating capacity of at least 8,000 and will have a central floor area that could be used for basketball games or mid-sized indoor concerts or other events that may need protection from the elements.

The construction of the facility has started or what used to be an open parking lot in front of the SMX Convention Center beside the MOA arena, with the facility expected to be completed sometime next year, depending on the builder's pace.

Dante L. Lucas

Biz Buzz

By the staff

Danding's legacy

WHEN SAN Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo **"Danding" Cojuangco** said recently that "everything" is for sale at the "right" price, he could have very well been referring to its entire 15-per-cent stake in the diversifying conglomerate.

Or maybe not, since the P75-a-share price at which he has made plans to unload his telltale stake (such less of a concern for the tycoon than the issue of succession in San Miguel) reflects, of course, in the midst of a historic installation into a conglomerate that will rely on an as-heavy infrastructure and traditional food and beverage businesses).

Under Cojuangco's leadership, that began in 1998, San Miguel accumulated a pile of cash that finished a series of local and overseas mergers and acquisitions, allowed the entry of Ayala Holdings in a strategic partner initially, and allowed the business model of the conglomerate to allow its diversification into capital-intensive but potentially higher-yielding businesses.

His planned "exit" would really a surprise, as the market had nagging suspicions about it since last year, when he allowed Top Frontier Investment Holdings Inc. to acquire a substantial stake in San Miguel, which in turn later bought 46 percent of Top Frontier.

It will be a complete exit as Danding will no longer be part of Top Frontier, in which "The Boss" has bestowed the right to buy his 15 percent stake within two years.

But Danding is leaving the conglomerate with a well-engineered equity structure that is less vulnerable to potentially hostile takeovers, technically Ashoo weapons and maybe even not running after his money.

More importantly, it shows where Danding trusts the most to lead San Miguel in navigating this new terrain:

Boris C. Davidson

Reshaping Petron

EVEN if it is one of the biggest firms in the country, the operations of Petron Corp.'s earnings has always been capped by its inability to increase profit margins by raising petroleum prices too much (even a 10-centavo-a-liter increase in the price of the usually sensitive commodity is greeted by howls of protest).

So what's the solution? Why lower costs, of course.

Ito Ilaan learned recently that the country's biggest oil refiner and distributor is in the process of setting up a trading firm in Singapore. The goal is to make the firm a more efficient purchaser and seller of crude oil and its finished products.

The scheme may not immediately result in lower prices at the pump, but it will result in better operating margins for the firm—and possibly make it more attractive from an equity investment standpoint.

So we await the inflection of SMC-initiated takeover and San Miguel in the decision? Boris C. Davidson

From the sidelines

LAWYER **Francis Lim** may no longer be the president of the Philippine Stock Exchange, but that doesn't mean he is no longer keen in its developments in the bourse.

In fact, he seems to be watching things closer than ever, especially

BENJIE B

First Philippine Holdings Corporation

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

Please take notice that the Annual Stockholders Meeting of First Philippine Holdings Corporation will be held on **Monday, May 31, 2010, at 2:00 p.m.** at the **Mendiola Theater**, Lopez Building, Ortigas Ave., Pasig City.

The Agenda of the meeting are as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Required Notice
3. Determination of Quorum
4. Approval of the Minutes of the May 25, 2009 Annual Stockholders Meeting
5. Reports of the Chairman & the President
6. Approval/Ratification of the December 31, 2009 Reports and the Audited Financial Statements
7. Ratification of the Acts of the Board, of the Executive Committee and of Management
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditors
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

For the purpose of the meeting, only stockholders of record as of March 24, 2010 are entitled to attend and to vote in the said meeting.

All stockholders who will not, are unable, or do not expect to attend the meeting in person may choose to execute and send a valid proxy to our Stock Transfer Agent, Securities Transfer Services, Inc., Ground Floor, Rainbow Building, Exchange Road cor. Meralco Avenue, Pasig City on or before May 24, 2010. Proxies shall be validated beginning on May 17, 2010, 9:00 a.m. at the company's office until May 24, 2010.

(SGD.) **ENRIQUE I. QUIAZON**
Corporate Secretary

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Accounting for Non-Accountants Series (NEW)

Module 1: Fundamentals of Accounting

June 17, 2010 (Thurs.), 8:30 AM-5:30 PM, Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City

Accounting often is referred to as "the language of business" because of its role in maintaining and processing all relevant financial information that an entity or company requires for its managing and reporting purposes. Users other than not, from businessmen, entrepreneurs, managers, owners and other professionals would review accounting to head staff and managers.

We don't mean to drive or not because we want to become professional owners. Neither do we mean accounting to become accountants. The Accounting Language is like any other language, is still to be learned in order to give us the independence of thought and action when dealing with situations that require decision making. This will require a clear understanding of the accounting language and its processes.

Accounting for Non-Accountants Series (NEW)

Module 2: Managerial Accounting

June 18, 2010 (Fri.), 8:30 AM-5:30 PM, Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City

After acquiring an understanding of the accounting language and the processes that are required to come up with financial statements, the next step is to gain an insight on how this information can be used to assist management in achieving its goals. This is where managerial accounting plays in.

This course is designed to give you an insight on the significance of managerial accounting, what information can be derived from financial statements and how they can be used to make informed decisions. The tools arising from the accounting information system is the heart of any organization's reporting system. Every manager should therefore know how to use it.

2nd Fundamentals of Customer Service

June 19, 2010 (Wed.), 8:30 AM-5:30 PM, Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City

Many organizations see customer service as a key differentiator in everyday complaints or processing. It is not surprising then that customer service personnel are frustrated as firefighters and not solution providers, the main functions as people tend to say good morning but is that not all there is to customer service?

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ABENSON

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Q1 farm production seen to contract by at least 3%

SMC unit seen taking over Ilijan IPPA in end June

By Amy R. Remo

SAN MIGUEL ENERGY CORP. TARGETS TO take over by the end of June the management of the contracted capacity for the 1,200-megawatt (MW) Ilijan natural gas power facility in Batangas, a company official said.

"The effective [turnover] date based on the agreement was June 26, so we have to work on that," said Rafael C. Borromeo, gen. mgr. and manager at SMEC.

According to Borro, the company plans to make its first monthly payment for the independent power producer administrator (IPPA) contract on the same date.

Unlike in the acquisition of government-owned generation assets, bidders for IPPA contracts do not need to make an upfront payment of at least 40 percent of the bid price, as takeovers for facility. They only have to make monthly payments, depending on the schedule they will submit to Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM).

Last month, SMEC, the energy arm of diversifying conglomerate San Miguel Corp., submitted the highest bid of $670 million for the IPPA contract for the Ilijan purchase.

It beated the offers of the Aboitiz-owned Therma Power Visayas Inc. ($430 million), Therma Luzon Inc. and Energy Development Corp. ($394 million) and the Lopez-led First Gen Luzon Power Corp. ($354 million).

Sison did not disclose the amount of the company's monthly payments but added that the bid contract amount would be payable over 12 years.

He said the company needed to shell out "minimal equity" for the payment of the monthly fees, after which the balance would be paid with the income the consortium would generate from the trading of the Ilijan output.

The Ilijan management deal was the

SPECIAL

Recovery expected in 2H

By Kae T. Olchondra

ECONOMISTS SAID THE AGRICULTURE sector may resurface by more than 1 percent in the first quarter of 2010, due to diverse typhoons in late 2009 and dry spells in the first quarter.

They however said crop production could pick up more with normal rainfall and the traditional boost in demand because of Christmas spending.

University of the Philippines economist professor Arsenio Balisacan said in an interview that a 3-percent contraction was a "conservative estimate" for the first sector for the first three months of the year.

Balisacan said the typhoons inflicted damage to irrigation and other farm infrastructure in the year was compounded by an already dry weather in major crop producing areas early this year.

Production may still be down in the second quarter but recovery in the second half is possible, he said.

University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) economist Cid Terosa, who heads the university's Center for Food and Agri Business, said in a separate interview that first quarter farm output might contract by 3 to 5 percent. But despite the low growth, he said 2.8-3 percent in the first quarter in 2009.

Quarter-on-quarter, only 2009 is still seen to fare worse than the fourth quarter of 2009, when damage brought by Tropical Storm "Ondoy" and Typhoon "Pepeng" pushed the 4.9-percent decline in farm output.

Oil said rice, corn, bananas, and sugarcane output and the growth of hog and poultry raising could have likely affected adversely by flooding and the land history was also affected.

While the Department of Agriculture has yet to release its crop damage reports and estimates data from provincewide, the inter-agency National Disaster Coordinating Council reported that the rice spoilt had so far resulted in a production loss of more than P 12 billion.

Crops considered more than a month ahead of harvest when [illegible]

The recovery in farm output recovery could be expected in the third and fourth quarters for the agriculture sector, which accounts for some 20 percent of the gross domestic product.

By then, the weather will have subsided. Also, the economists said demand for food and other consumer products would likely spike in the months leading to December. This should prompt farmers to produce more to meet the fourth quarter, they said.

With the expected recovery in the second half of the year, they said there was hope for the sector to post growth for the whole year.

The inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee (NEDA-DBCC), which sets the country's macroeconomic targets, said last export posted on its website that the agriculture sector was expected to grow by 0.1 to 1.1 percent in 2010.

It also projects that the farm output will expand by 2.8 percent by 2013 to post a full-year growth of 2.6- 3.5 percent.

Balisacan and Oil said the target was achievable barring unforeseen changes in the weather.

Foreign direct investments in the agriculture industry, which includes manufacturing industries such as power and energy could boost agricultural output, the DBCC said.

It also cited efforts to improve the variety and quality of crops, livestock and fisheries.

Government infrastructure spending is a growth area due to rising demand for construction materials.

They said a healthy rise in credit should support economic growth.

The government is projecting a 3.5-3.6 percent economic growth this year, faster than the 2009 expansion of 0.9 percent.

Monetary officials said the 2010 growth target seemed attainable given continued positive economic indicators, rising recovery in exports, sustained rise in remittances, and growing liquidity in the domestic financial market.

Time, savings deposits in banks up

By Michelle V. Remo

SAVINGS AND TIME DEPOSITS pooled by the banking system rose in the first two months of the year, supporting government's assertion by monetary officials that the economy is experiencing growth in key [illegible] that economic officials expected recovery this year.

In a report, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said aggregate savings and time deposits placed in banks from January to February this year amounted to P3.3 trillion, up by nearly 7 percent from P3.1 trillion in the same months a year ago.

"Savings and time deposits remain the banks' main source of funds," the BSP said in its latest "Inflation Report."

Monetary officials said the increase in bank deposits would help boost growth of bank loans, which should in turn help lead to consumption and investments this year.

They said a healthy rise in credit should support economic growth.

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First oil from offshore Palawan well seen this month

Production rate at 7,000 to 15,000 barrels a day

By Jun R. Reyes

AUSTRALIAN IPM SEO Petroleum Ltd. said it was on track to meet its target of delivering the first oil from the Tindalo prospect in offshore Palawan within the month as most of the necessary equipment and services have been put in place.

The development of the Tindalo prospect will allow the company to produce 7,000-15,000 barrels of oil a day.

The Tindalo prospect, which is part of Service Contract 346, or the shallow water development area covering some 907 sq.m., is seen to yield up to 24.3 million barrels of oil.

However, the said firm has to complete a number of activities under the company's work program prior to the production drilling of Tindalo-5.

Williams explained that the crude-oil transfer from would have to be connected to both the rig and the floating storage and offtake (FSO) vessel, which would link the crude production, delivery and storage options.

The final installation, hook-up and pre-commissioning testing of the production equipment on board the rig would have to be conducted, after which the Tindalo-5 well would be completed and made ready for production.

According to Rido Gepiti managing director Franz Williams, the hook-up rig Seaventure Driller has completed the Tindalo-1 tie-back operations and, close to evaluation while the production processing equipment has been loaded and assembled on the rig.

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San Miguel to buy back majority of power firms

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL CORP. HAS MAPPED out plans to eventually buy from its ally Global 5000 Investments Inc. a controlling stake in two key power generation subsidiaries operating the San Roque, Ambuklao-Binga power plants.

San Miguel president Ramon Ang said in a recent briefing that the conglomerate would prepare its balance sheet before eventually acquiring the operations of new power generation subsidiaries—Strategic Power Development Corp. (SPDC) and San Miguel Energy Corp. (SMEC). Based on a waiver regulatory filing, the conglomerate agreed to let Global 5000 Investments waive its as a 40-percent stockholder of the two subsidiaries.

Ang denied speculation that San Miguel might be selling control of SPDC and SMEC to part down its power generation interest and eventually buy into National Transmission Co. "We're still in [generation competition]. We won't get into anything that's not allowed," Ang said.

When San Miguel was bidding for the independent power producer

Option deal with Global 5000

(IPP) administrations contracts, Ang said Global 5000 was its partner all along. "When we're bidding, you need a large sum of money so we needed a partner. But unless the balance sheet is OK, for accounting with Global 5000 is San Miguel has the options to buy control or buy them out totally. It's ours," he said.

SPDC is the IPP administrator of the 345-megawatt San Roque multipurpose hydroelectric power plant in Binalonga, San Roque, San Miguel, Pangasinan.

SMEC is the IPP administrator for the 1,000-MW combined fuel coal-fired power plant. It also recently bagged the right to manage and operate the 1,200-MW Ilijan gas plant and also acquired other that year 100-percent of the outstanding capital stock of Ingrama Agro Minerals Inc., a coal mining company with a 2,000-hectare coal property located at Isla Sebu, South Cotabato.

SMEC was also the previous winning buyer of the 620-MW Limay power plant that was privatized by the government last year. However, SMEC had said that the transaction of the power plant to a 100-percent owned San Miguel subsidiary Beaucle Energy Holdings Inc., which started operations of the plant last Feb. 16. This means that Limay is the only power generation business that would be soon delisted into San Miguel's books this year.

Global 5000 Investment Inc., which first grabbed the limelight in late-2008 when it bought into Manila Electric Co. in a rolling-off of San Miguel, is led by businessmen Hugo Dalisi, former Manila Electric Co. Chairman and conglomerate Jaime Gaw, joe—his playate behind Top Frontier Holdings Inc., which is now the dominant selling Hee in Isla Digest.

"Eventually we hope to be able to consolidate our power investments and other investments," Ang said. "Energy and power will be at least more than 60 percent [of San Miguel's business] if we consolidate everything."

ABS-CBN allots ₱1.6B for broadband service

By Paolo G. Montecillo

MULTIMEDIA GIANT ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. plans to borrow P600 million this year for the nationwide rollout of its broadband Internet business.

Earlier this week, the company said it would invest heavily in expanding the reach of its Internet business, which is operated by ABS-CBN subsidiary Sky Cable.

For Sky Cable boss, the company plans to spend P600 million of borrowed funds to cover the entire cost. Expanding to other key areas like Cebu and Davao, meanwhile, will be part of the company's P1-billion capital expenditure program for the year.

"Sky Cable has to finalize its plans soon, but it really makes sense to do this [rollout this year," ABS-CBN chief financial officer Ruben Jo Valdueza said.

He said the company may have to borrow from local banks the P600 million it needed for the expansion in Metro Manila.

Sky Cable's Internet business, which operates under the brand Sky Broadband, is double-fixed digital subscriber line (DSL) plans to homes or small businesses. Instead of having to Internet signals pass through regular phone lines like other Internet providers, Sky uses its network of cable TV wires, which are thicker and more reliable.

This allows Sky Cable to offer Internet speeds of up to 12 megabytes per second (mbps), which is much faster than the average Zonbar offered by other firms.

Sky Broadband has 25,000 subscribers, all in Metro Manila. Valdueza said the company aimed to bump this up to 30,000 subscribers by the end of the year.

In the first quarter, revenues from the company's broadband business grew 34 percent.

Meanwhile, Valdueza said ABS-CBN also planned to acquire P100 million worth of new equipment to allow Sky customers to get their high-definition or HD content. However, the HD set-up comes and game shows the company plans to produce will initially not be for TV audiences in the Philippines.

JG Summit net income surges 410% in Q1

THE GOKONGWEI JG SUMMIT Holdings Inc. picked up its first-quarter net profit by 410 percent to P4.41 billion from a year ago, on a large foreign exchange windfall added to the higher profits raised in by core food, airline, real estate and telecommunications businesses.

The net profit level surpassed the P1.1-billion net income recorded by diversified conglomerate Ayala Corp. and was next to the firm's the P4.0-billion net profit booked by tycoon Henry Sy's SM Investments Corp. for the same period.

JG Summit's soaring core said of by monetary gains reaped from the continuous recovery of the Peso-versus-dollar, and the strengthening of the against the dollar. It booked a foreign exchange gain of P1.22 billion for the period, a turnaround from last year's net foreign exchange loss of P949.91 million.

But revenue-fueling businesses also grew, as the conglomerate reported that its core earnings doubled to P4.86 billion from P2.42 billion last year. Cash flow is measured by earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization that surged to P9.5 billion from P6.43 billion.

Consolidated revenues went up 13.1 percent to P59.75 billion, driven by the continued improvement in sales and revenues of businesses in food, airline, real estate development and telecom, particularly in the wireless segment. Only its petrochemical businesses has remained uneven during the period.

Mostly half of JG Summit's net profit was dumped in its food unit Universal Robina Corp., which posted a net income attributable to equity holders of the parent of P2.08 billion for the first quarter. This was up 48.0 percent from a year ago on higher sales volume and lower input costs.

Cebu air Inc., operator of airline Cebu Pacific, also posted a sharp rise in net profit to P1.3-billion from P530-million.

Boy C. Dumlao

Online broker posts 42% jump in net profit

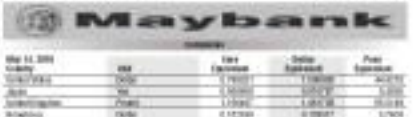
LEADING ONLINE STOCKBROKER Colfinancebanker.com Inc. grew its first quarter net profit by 42 percent year-on-year on brisk trading investors' interests in a much improved global investor confidence.

Citibank Online doubled up P64 million in net profit in the first three months on the back of P103 million in revenues, up nearly up 21 percent from a year ago.

"With the better than-expected global economy and material outlooks in regional and local markets, we capitalized a substantial increase in trading activity from our customers," company president Gerardo Boto said in a statement.

"Trading-related revenues, accounted for more than 90 percent of total revenues coming from commissions generated and interest income from its margin financing accounts," he added.

Colfinancebanker derived from trading operations in the Philippines and Hong Kong posted a 24-percent growth in P65 million. This



RP's 'largest' casino to open in '11

Belle's project seen to cost P9B

By Dorie L. Laus

LEISURE ENTITY FIRM BELLE Corp. will launch its first major foray into the gaming industry with the improved operating of the country's largest casino by late next year.

The casino complex that will rise near the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City will cost the Henry Sy-controlled firm about P9 billion, including the cost of the land and the gaming franchise, according to Belle executive vice president and chief financial officer Manuel A. Gana.

The casino itself will have a floor area of between 15 and 20 hectares, Gana told the Star.

"It is more finished today and if it were done in two hectares, I think it will be bigger than what Resorts World has right now," Gana said.

Belle's foundation to entry into the gaming industry last year with its acquisition from IM Commercial Properties Inc. of Premium Leisure and Amusement Inc. (PLAI), the firm which holds a franchise from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. for the operation of a casino complex in the Manila Bay area.

The Belle official said the gaming franchise was covered by PLAI which was acquired by the firm from IM in exchange for 2.7 billion Belle shares.

"Whatever has PLAI has the franchise," he said. "Under law, you cannot transfer a franchise, but you can sell the corporation that has the franchise."

PLAI's casino franchise is meant to be part of a 120-hectare leisure complex known as the Bagong Nayong Pilipino Entertainment City being put up by the state-operating regulator.

Belle's gaming operation will come online in three phases over a five-year period. Private plans call for the construction of a four-tower complex with eight stories each—or hotel funded by hotels restrictions imposed by aviation authorities, since the facility is to cater to near aircraft flight paths around the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The first phase, which will include the casino and some VIP suites, will cost P4.5 billion, excluding the cost of land and the gaming franchise.

"When we open it [in late 2011], we probably won't have all the retail [establishments] in, we won't have all the hotels in yet," Gana said. "Those will come later."

Previous reports have identified US-based Harrah's Entertainment Inc.—the world's largest provider of branded casino entertainment—as Belle's partner for the venture, although company officials were tight-lipped about the deal's finer points during last Friday's stockholders' meeting.

Belle's main partner for the project is listed from Leisure Investa World Corp., which has yet to sign formal agreements with potential foreign casino operators, he said.

"We're not going to operate [the casino] ourselves," Gana said. "We have the franchise, we have the land, and we will be putting up part of the structure."

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ATR KimEng posts 95% profit growth

By Doris C. Dumlao

FINANCIAL SERVICES FIRM ATR KimEng Financial Corp. posted a 95-percent growth in first quarter net profit on higher revenues from investment, capital markets, asset management and real estate businesses.

ATRKE Financial's consolidated net income attributable to its shareholders for the first quarter ended P94.3 million versus the P48.4 million recorded in the same period last year, the firm said in its latest quarterly report to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Consolidated revenue went up by 33.9 percent to P213.4 million while total expenses went up by 22.8 percent to P93.8 million over a year ago.

ATRKE President Manuel Sorbelles said the company's total revenue was driven by the strong showing in insurance premiums, commissions and interest income.

"Our performance in the first quarter shows the continued importance in the economic environment," said Sorbelles.

"With the recent conclusion of a peaceful national and local elections, we are optimistic that this will bring about greater stability which will further encourage growth. The ATR KimEng group sees the country's economic potential and is positioned to take advantage of the opportunities that will present themselves in our capital markets, insurance, and real estate businesses for the rest of the year."

ATRKE Financial's insurance business from subsidiaries Insular Life Assurance Co., and AmerAlli & Oriental Insurance Corp. contributed P52.8 million in premium and interest income, up by 16.6 percent over a year ago.

Its capital markets group also sustained its strong performance with commissions, mainly from stock brokerage subsidiary ATR KimEng Securities, Inc., increasing by 85.4 percent year-on-year to nearly P106.6 million as local equity trading improved over the same period last year.

JG completes RBS deal

JG SUMMIT RECENTLY COMpleted its acquisition of Royal Bank of Scotland (PH), Inc., paving the way for Robinsons Bank's conversion into a commercial bank and JG's re-entry into countertown banking.

"The acquisition will allow JG Summit to get back into commercial banking, to complement its conglomerate's financial synergy and compete aggressively in a way the Gokongwei group is known for," said Robinsons Bank chair Lance Gokongwei. The amount involved was not disclosed.

He said JG Summit, through Robinsons Bank, was positioning itself for further business growth and "we wanted to be there to provide funding to business once the economic climate picks up."

"The transaction was flawlessly executed. I am certain that the enlarged Robinsons Bank will be a formidable player in the local banking industry," Royal Bank of Scotland Philippines president and country executive Billy Gonzalez said.

Robinsons Bank has at present 52 branches nationwide. With the merger, the non-commercial bank will be the 14th largest in the category.

Biz Buzz

From page B1

with the reform moves initiated under his watch. So much so that he is confident that the new board has approved the spin-off of its market regulation functions into a new unit, which will allow the independent policing of the ranks of the trading participants. Such segregation, after all, was part of his advocacy when he was still with PSE.

Lim said this should boost investor confidence, but it will still be up to the Securities and Exchange Commission to ensure that sufficient mechanisms are in place to attain the objective of the segregation.

His original proposal called for the new unit to have regulatory jurisdiction over both brokers and listed companies. The PSE, however, decided to start off first with the brokers, which still owns 35 percent of the local bourse.

"That's a very good start, but the PSE doesn't have totally separate its regulatory from its business functions," Lim said. "Such separation will not only create a level playing field between the brokers and listed companies but will further help the PSE to grow its business as a listed company and thereby enhance shareholder value." Doris C. Dumlao

Be First with UNO.

Executives of PLDT and partner companies flash the number 1 sign during PLDT Uno Press Launch. They are, from left: Monica Cabezuela, PLDT Product Specialist; Richard Silvers, PLDT Product Manager; Jon Dionjuan, PLDT Head of Business Applications Solutions Development; Ray Sapalmer Quampo, PLDT Head Corporate Value; Vic Sy, PLDT Head of Corporate Business Solutions; Denise Ramos, PLDT FVP & Head of Corporate Business Group; Lisaida Castillo, Alcatel-Lucent Philippines Country Manager; Stephen Wise, Cisco Country Manager; Edgar Dorotheo, Avaya Philippines Senior Country Manager; Ron Isberio, PLDT Public Affairs Head; and Joey Lineses, PLDT Head of Corporate Solutions Development & Quality Management.

PLDT launches the Philippines' first managed unified communication solution

PLDT is definitely changing the game of communications. Together with Alcatel-Lucent, Avaya and Cisco, PLDT launched the country's first managed unified communication solution at PLDT tenstalk recently. Members of the press were also present to witness the unveiling of UNO, the Coordinated and Seamless Communications Solution for Business.

PLDT UNO brings the ultimate in Collaboration, Mobility, and Savings to companies. Corporate clients will be among the first to avail PLDT UNO, and enjoy IP Telephony, Unified Messaging, and a host of different choices for conferencing, as well as PLDT's excellently managed services.

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We Fix answers questions from members of media during the press launch.

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BUSINESS

DOF seeks abolition of losing state firms

Move expected to reduce budget deficit

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE wants to abolish, if not privatize, losing government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), in order to rationalize expenditures and put the fiscal house in order.

According to a top finance official, the DOF will also urge the new administration to adopt a broad deficit-reduction plan to wipe out the budget deficits over the medium term.

"Improving the government's fiscal situation should be done not only by collecting more taxes but also by cutting expenditures. [The DOF proposes] to privatize, rationalize, or abolish some of these GOCCs that are dependent on huge subsidies from the national government," the finance official said Friday.

One state firm, the National Food Authority (NFA), has been incurring losses while it continues to receive subsidies from the government year after year, said the official, who refused to be identified.

According to data from the finance department, subsidies to the NFA amounted to about P4 billion in 2009, up from P2.92 billion the previous year.

The losses are attributed to the NFA's mandate, which is to sell affordable rice, even at a loss, amid rising prices in the international market.

Under the DOF proposal, the trading function of the NFA could be privatized. This means the private sector must take up the task of importing rice to meet the country's huge demand.

According to the DOF, the NFA may continue to function as regulator. The government agency will also oversee rice importation activities of the private sector.

If the NFA were to be privatized, the price would have no access to affordable rice.

To address this, the finance official pointed to the government's Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) program, which would allow the poor access to rice basic commodity.

Under the CCT program, the government will grant food subsidies to selected families provided that the recipients meet certain requirements, such as sending children to school while family members get to regularly visit health centers.

Over the years, the government has been shelling out billions to subsidize state firms that are not able to generate sufficient revenues to sustain operations.

According to the DOF, the government has set aside around P14 billion in subsidy for 2010. Last year, the government spent P17.47 billion.

Apart from the NFA, other state firms heavily dependent on subsidies are Philippine National Railways, Land Transportation Authority, National Electrification Administration, National Housing Authority, and Local Water Utilities Administration.

The finance official said there is a serious need for the government to raise revenue and cut costs given the surge in its deficit last year, which was made worse by the global economic turmoil. The government incurred a deficit of P189 billion in 2009, up from P68.1 billion the previous year.

Finance tool to aid BSP policy

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas will launch this year the "Consumer Finance Survey," results of which will be used to guide monetary policy and help it understand the financial behavior of Filipinos.

Bendel Guerrero, director of the central bank's economic statistics department, said Friday that results of the survey would also aid the government in promoting financial literacy in the country.

The survey will determine the coverage and investment pattern of respondents," Guerrero said.

Respondents will also be asked of their consumption and investment habits, apart from their assets and liabilities, she added.

Compared with the other BSP surveys, the Consumer Finance Survey is the most tedious, requiring around 10,000 respondents nationwide to answer their questionnaires, Guerrero said.

Some industrialized countries, including the United States, conduct the same survey in Asia, the Philippines will be the first to conduct such a survey, she said. *Michelle V. Remo*

TV-5 to launch int'l channel

By Paolo E. Montecillo

CONFIDENT OF BEING well on its way to becoming the most watched channel in the country in the next five years, Pangilinan-led television network TV-5 said it plans to compete with its local rivals on a global scale.

At a recent briefing, TV-5 president and CEO Ray Espinosa said the company plans to reach out to 10 Philippine communities abroad by branching an international television channel, just as the ABS-CBN and GMA 7 have done.

"We have a team of people looking at that [area] of business right now," Espinosa said.

Espinosa said launching its own international channel, which has been lucrative for its rivals, will come as TV-5 develops more of its own content. The company, which has been aggressively hiring talents from rival networks, said an international channel would be launched sometime in the second quarter of the year.

The company is also eyeing an international channel for its pay-per-view service control of Lopez subsidiary GreenCore Cinemas, Inc. for the existing Parliament and Tanguian facilities in Negros Oriental and Leyte, respectively.

The DOE also disclosed that it was negotiating with BDC, the country's largest producer of geothermal energy, for the approval of four prospective geothermal areas in Mindoro Occidental, Negros Occidental, North Cotabato and Zamboanga del Sur.

Government documents also showed that Chevron Geothermal Philippines Holdings Inc. (CGPHI) had two applications for contracts with Protected Areas Technical Assistance Agreements (PTAA) procedures for the 289-megawatt geothermal facility in Tiwi, Albay, and the 438.33-MW power plant in Mak-Ban.

The Manila Power Corp. (PPC) also has a similar application for its proposed 40-MW geothermal power project in Cagua-Baua in Cagayan.

This was one of the geothermal areas that were offered for bidding by the DOE last last year.

DOE studies 'clean' energy plans

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY is evaluating over 50 applications for renewable energy service contracts.

Data from the DOE showed that there are 43 pending wind turbine applications from the companies, which include Lopez-led Energy Development Corp., EDC Private Ltd. Co., Northwind Power Development Corp., Philcarbon Inc., Philippine Hybrid Energy Systems Inc., Synergy CGS Corp., Sarawave Water and Electric Co. Inc. and Tri-coast Clean Energy.

Almost 28 of the 43 proposed wind power projects are expected to generate at least 1,000 megawatts in additional capacity to the country's three main grids. The DOE did not provide further data on the other applications.

The DOE is also evaluating the pending applications for a geothermal service contract of Lopez subsidiary GreenCore Geothermal Inc. for the existing Palinpinon and Tongonan fields in Negros Oriental and Leyte, respectively.

BUSINESS Monday Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

PFA warns against franchising scams

THE PHILIPPINE FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION (PFA) reserves its commitment to work hand-in-hand with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in curbing illegal franchises that are victimizing unwitting entrepreneurs and would-be franchisees.

PFA, intent for imposing the fair franchising Standards [PFS], which all members are required to adhere, is maintain the highest ethical standards in franchising, says Portia Ilanlo Ochoa, president of PFA.

The PFS has been adopted by PFA to promote transparency in the conduct of business between franchisor and franchisee.

Ochoa underscored the importance of extending assistance to widen in on its legal part of creating a successful franchise enterprise.

"The PFA has continued its advocacy in informing, guiding, and educating new players, especially OFWs who wish to own their franchise. Unfortunately, an unscrupulous few have taken advantage of the good name of franchising for their selfish benefit," Ochoa says.

Philippine franchising has significantly contributed to enterprise development and job creation.

The sector accounts for about 60 billion to about 28 percent of the country's retail sales. Last year alone, PFA member businesses generated at least 270,000 jobs.

Denouncing franchising because of the shady practices of a few will not only be detrimental to the sector but to the country's economy added the PFA chief. The premier franchising organization is resolute in resolving the issue for the sake of the service, and more importantly, the public.

Earlier this year, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) asked the Department of Foreign Affairs to issue an advisory to all Philippine posts to warn OFWs against rampant franchising scams.

The PFA also shares these tips:

1. Know what franchising really is. Franchising is supposed to be a close partnership between the franchisor and the franchisee. Your franchise agreement should embody this.

2. Consult a lawyer. A franchise agreement is a legal document. You should get professional help before signing anything.

3. Know your franchisor. Don't be captivated by sweet promises. Check out the company that's offering you a business.

4. Know the other franchisees. Do this so that you'll have an idea on how the company is treating its franchisees.

5. Call the PFA Secretariat. It is best to go to the association where the most trusted franchises belong. You may contact PFA at (632) 4870260 to 67 or at pfa@pfa.org.ph. For more else check them website: www.pfa.org.ph.

"In light of this, we would like to remind the public, especially aspiring entrepreneurs, to be more circumspect when investing on a business. This is what every responsible entrepreneur should do," adds Ochoa.

To check the legitimacy of franchise operations, contact DTI at telephone number 751-3330 or PFA on (632)4870260 to 67 or e-mail pfa@pfa.org.ph.

Taking a page off a firm's book

Franchising offers investors chance to use perfected business concept of others

By Joe Vistana

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM, JOIN them.

For those who are not too sure about investing money in a new business venture, getting a franchise can be the better choice.

Getting a franchise saves you time and effort in creating marketing plans, and spares you the risk of failure when establishing your own well-known brand.

To cut the long business talk short, franchising gives you the opportunity to simply process and use another's perfected business concept.

The franchisee gives you the support needed—training, help in setting up the business, and ongoing advice on how to run the business.

There are over 1,000 franchise brands in the Philippines with about 115,000 outlets all over the globe, according to a survey by the Philippine Franchising Association, the governing body for franchising in the country.

The PFA is responsible for the growth of the sector, from only 50 franchises in the early '90s to almost 1,000 in 2008. In 2009 alone, the success of franchising has generated sales amounting to P186 billion, five percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The PFA has been helping entrepreneurs since it was established in 1995. Its aim is to organize the growing number of franchise industry players, both homegrown and foreign, and to promote franchising to interested Filipino entrepreneurs.

"We have programs and seminars on how to buy a franchise. And the PFA gives these sessions all throughout the year," says Sunie Lee, chair emeritus of the PFA. "We teach people the A to Z of franchising and our main goal is to educate them well so that they can put to good use their hard-earned money."

The PFA also encourages established names to open their brand to other entrepreneurs for it has its advantages, one of which is it helps your business grow.

PFA member Jollibee Food Corp., the No. 1 fastfood chain in the Philippines, credits franchising for its success.

"We are proud to say that 51 percent of all our stores all over the country are franchises," says Maloe Ramos, franchise and events manager of Jollibee Foods Corp. "I believe a big part of the success of Jollibee is because we have been working very well with our franchisees. We grow as partners."

Ramos shares that Jollibee Food Corp. has been fortunate to have franchisees who are really serious about taking care of the brand.

Jollibee's franchising investment ranges from P3 million to P30 million, depending on the size and store model. Despite its huge capital outlay, more Jollibee franchise stores are targeted to be put up this year.

Jollibee has even branched out overseas and now has stores in Hong Kong, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, China and the United States—all of which are franchisee except for the stores in the United States.

The Philippines now has 17 franchises overseas. Ten of which are in fastfood (Jollibee, Chowking, Goldilocks, Hotshots Pizza—Grilled Burgers, Mang's Restaurant, Potemkin Haraan, Potato Corner, Red Ribbon, Travel Cafe and Waffle Time), four in retail (Bench, EBC home of Beauty Exclusives, Kultura and Penshoppe), and three in service (Crystal Clear Water, Skypx Couriers and Systems Technology Institute).

Franchising is not only limited to those who can buy an entire franchise. PFA director for Southern Luzon Evelina Manotok says franchising is for anyone as long as you are eager to work as a team.

"Many people are interested in franc-

TAKING B2 ›

THE PHILIPPINES has 17 franchise brands overseas, including Jollibee.

Dear Mr. President

MAPping THE FUTURE
Jaclyn B. Simpson

NOW THAT YOU ARE CLEARLY on your way to becoming the 15th President of the Republic of the Philippines, we congratulate you and all the victors in this first automated elections. An overwhelming number of Filipinos gave you the mandate to lead them and have placed their hope for change in your hands. You can inspire them to support and help you deliver on your campaign promises—a lot the level of our poor countrymen, to learn, if not eradicate, corruption and restore moral order to public service.

Good news

It is good news to hear that your many opponents have conceded and accepted your victory. You have the tough challenge though of having to work with a government peppered with a mix of traditional politicians, bozos, judicial remnants of past administrations, leftists and young idealists. Conflicting interests and agendas may force you to compromise but if you stand firm and clearly affirm that your decisions and actions always "put country above self," that you are committed only to the best interest of the Filipino people, you can depend on the public to stand by you against the forces that will try to perpetuate "more of the same". Our electorate has matured and can easily see if you are well meaning. You can even delay doing so the people from whom you derived your power and they will be your understanding buffer against those who promote personal and selfish interests, instead of the common good.

We urge you to appoint the most competent people of proven integrity in your official family. Please do not consider guerrero, most appointments to positions of power as a reward or threat who supported your campaign. He should not use this as a weapon of vindictiveness against men and women of probity and honesty who happened to serve the past administration. The goodwill borne out of your victory should not be eroded by unpopular choices; rather, the quality of your appointees should further confirm your desire for good government. You need the best and the brightest men and women to help you and the precious resources which our country has to offer. Our fiscal deficits, our high unemployment, widespread corruption, extreme poverty, overpopulation are complex problems that require extraordinary competence and dedication.

Out of government deals

Please advise your friends and relatives to stay out of government deals. Your job is difficult as it is and you need not spend time defending them from criticisms, regardless of whether they deserve it or not. The country can manage bad, faulty without engaging overzealous and friends. If they really want you to succeed as President, they should leave you alone to work any favors from government.

You promised to live simply, just like an ordinary Cebu, and you appropriately demonstrated this with pictures where you lined up for hours to cast your vote. You promised to that you will suffer with us in traffic and just about our patience with the blaring sirens of your arrogant security. Despite oldest government officials who snake through traffic in their bullet-proof vehicles, commuters or OFW's with a convoy of escorts showing us aside. Please set the example by exercising that little prudence with moderation.

Visionary leader

We need a visionary leader—one who thinks and plans long term. We expect you to show us the direction where you want us to take us, clearly and in terms we can understand. Lead us in the march towards this new direction. We want you to inspire us to work in perfect and elevate our country to its rightful and respectable place in the family of nations. Make us one country, one people again. Please prioritize the positives that will pull our country towards the vision that moved us, as a people, to elect you as our leader.

God bless you Mr. President. This is the destiny you did not choose for yourself. Someone greater than all of us anointed you and please do not fail Him.

(The author was MAP President in 2006 and is Chair of the MAP National Issues Committee for 2010. Feedback at map@philippine.com.ph for previous articles, please visit www.map.org.ph.)

CETH Fabin, country general manager of TNT's Philippine operations.

B2B express delivery service ups TNT sales

By Chuppie Medina
Contributor

BY GIVING MORE EMPHASIS to its business-to-business service, and at the same time maintaining optimum efficiency of its land and air delivery operations, TNT in the Philippines has managed to survive the toughest local and global economic challenges of the last two decades.

Despite the ill effects of the financial crisis that rocked the world, TNT Philippines continued to grow its import shipments by more than 30 percent last year. This, despite a negative 26.8 percent panning in the country's overall importation figures.

Such achievement attests to the company's claim of being the trusted choice of businesses in moving products across countries, hurdles of even just within the archipelago's boundaries, according to CEDRIC FABIN, country general manager of TNT's Philippine operations.

Having a good bed of how local business behaves, helps, adds Fabin, finds much knowledge, culled from almost three decades of operating in the country, has helped TNT anticipate businessmen's needs.

"Turn with the world spinning into a seven, not, we had noted the continued importation of raw materials and products, mainly from China by businesses operating in the Philippines," according to Fabin.

This observation also helped facilitate the decision of Netherlands-based TNT Express Worldwide in 2008 to allocate a portion of its €200 million five-year investment plan worldwide to new depots and equipment here.

Just opened in the Philippines last last year was a P15-million depot in San Fernando, Pampanga designed to cater to a growing number of businesses in the northern part of Luzon. The San Fernando depot will complement two other planned depots, one scheduled to open in South Luzon later this year and a second one in Cebu, to serve the needs of businesses operating in those parts of the country according to Fabin.

Network, network, network

In 1987, at a time when competition was starting to build up in base in Manila, TNT decided to downgrade its facilities at the Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport and serving the Pacific region. Manila had been an ideal location for a hub when it was built in 1992 due to its proximity to Japan, Singapore, mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

However, TNT decided to relocate the international hub in the region to several locations which down to its then-growth industrial zone in China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

"TNT wanted to be closer to other industrial areas in Asia where there are more customers and where our company intended to give much better response to increasing customer demands," Fabin says.

Daily flights from Manila, however, were retained. "So, the service quality in Manila never decreased," Fabin adds. TNT relies on both the Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific Flights for domestic next day cargo operations. "So we do our domestic deliveries only by air, and transit times and reliability is superior compared to road and sea choices for operations," Fabin explains.

TNT's ground network continued to expand to more cities and with a bigger land fleet. Through TNT Delivery, a joint venture between TNT Express and Philippine Airlines, TNT Express in the country NO's direct distribution and pick up operations in the domestic arena is adequately handled.

"We utilize more than 100 commercial flights (on one and one of Philippines on a typical week. TNT Freighter aircraft C100 cargo capacity each. Flights are operating both from Hong Kong and Singapore to Europe. We connect our material to these Boeing 747 Freighter aircraft and also use direct commercial flights from Manila to Europe. These dual line-haul operations give us utmost flexibility for fastest transit times for our customers' shipments," Valcon says.

Investing in technology

A big part of the investment of TNT Express Worldwide in the Philippines involved technology upgrades.

"We believe information and communication technology is a great business enabler," says Fabin. Cutting edge technologies in the express delivery business is a must these days if TNT were to excel, if not exceed, what the competition of Aural, and to further assist customers meet their shipping needs as well as cost reduction.

TNT's technology investments are best seen at work in its Express Import service. Through a web-based system, and capitalizing on TNT's cargo presence in China, importers can now conveniently move shipments in a cost-efficient manner, Fabin notes.

TNT also now offers for free its e-invoicing system for customers who wish to view and receive outgoing and still invoices in downloadable soft copy through the Internet. The company likewise utilizes digital signature imaging, which has replaced the traditional paper transmittals, to prove shipment delivery.

Consumer-centric

Other consumer-centric offerings aside from Import Express are the all-popular Economy Express service for Filipino businessmen and expatriates who are not in a hurry to send shipments to other parts of the world because of the considerably low rates. Economy Express managed to register a year-on-year growth of more than 200 percent.

Customers in the clinical research industry also rely on TNT Philippines' highly-specialized Clinical Express courier system. In fact, Fabin says the company's 2009 growth rate of 80 percent being exceeded this year. Other value-added services include freight delivery involving heavy shipments and an inventory management service that allows customers to optimize inventory holding and transportation of critical spare parts or goods.

Since the opening of its own Philippine operations in April 2008, had brought with him over 35 years of experience in TNT operations, mainly with TNT Turkey where he started as an operations management, and later taking on the sales and marketing functions of the country operations and spearheading resources during a 38-year period.

In his current role, Fabin sees himself as contributing to TNT's aggressive growth and expansion plans in the Asia Pacific region while at the same time creating more opportunities to expand local revenue streams.

From page B4-1

Taking a page ...

dining but are mostly discouraged because they don't have enough money to buy an entire franchise. What they can do is to look for business opportunities set up at your favorite food court or convention. That way, you can start a business and everyone benefits," suggests MANIOC.

The PFA forecasts that food franchisees are expected to do well this year as the market is fueled by the stronger reminiscences by OFWs and pumped up by the election spending in the year's first quarter.

This year, the PFA is preparing for the 18th Philippine International Franchise Conference and Expo. The event, scheduled on July 14, 16 at the SMX Convention Center, will bring together international and Filipino franchise experts, business stakeholders, government and diplomatic leaders who will share and discuss the latest know-how in the art and science of franchising. The three-day expo, that is expected to have 100 booths, is a one-stop shop for the best business opportunities in retail, food and service franchising. For more details, visit www.franchise2010.com and register online for special admission rates.

Soap making seminar set

THE GOLDEN TREASURE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT Program will conduct a one-day seminar on soap making to be held in the POTC, Rts. 6 and 8, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Roman Ortiz, Iloilo, on Saturday (24 Pinyin Ave., on May 23, Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Participants will learn different kinds of soap, household and body care products through lectures and hands-on training by the making of liquid dishwashing soap, liquid hand soap, liquid all-purpose soap, bar detergent soap, powder soap, dishwashing paste soap, herbal soap, and glycerin transparent bath soap), liquid bleach, fabric softener, tile and hard cleaner, glass cleaner, carpet shampoo, air freshener, car shampoo, and others.

Resource centers include how to make hand sanitizer, body scrub, foot spa soap, foot spray, foot powder, hair shampoo, and hand and body lotion. Also topics to be discussed are screening of materials, costing and marketing strategies.

For questions, call (033)377; (063)320; 9136551 and 4337681.

Suzuki honors its Top Dealers of the Year

The country's only integrated automotive company, Suzuki Philippines Inc. (SPIN), honored its top dealers in separate ceremonies held last April 28, 2010, at La Pavilion, Pasay City.

For having surpassed their sales quotas in Suzuki's Balanced Score Card (SBSC) in 2009, Suzuki Auto Cebu was awarded Dealer of the Year among Suzuki's 19 automobile dealers nationwide. In 2008, Suzuki Auto Cebu was the top dealer in the province/city category.

Asked about the secret to their success, Suzuki Auto Cebu General Manager Dabbie Chua replied: "Winning the Dealer of the Year award is a testament to the hard work of our people. We will be trying very hard to maintain or even improve our sales volume and at the same time focus more on customer service so that we can contribute to the top line." Suzuki Auto Cebu is owned by Cebu Auto Centrale Corporation, headed by the dynamic husband-and-wife team of Brian and Karina Chua.

Suzuki Dealer of the Year Family

Suzuki Dealer of the Year Laguna

A consistent high performer in the past two years, Suzuki Auto Laguna received the first Top Dealer of the Year Award. They attribute their success to mastery of their territory, their ability to maintain a Balanced Score Card (BSC) system for evaluating and rewarding its dealers in terms of marketing strategy implementation, the comprehensive rating system includes retail sales performance and sales parts sales, as well as service and showroom compliance. The system also includes a Balanced Score Card (BSC) system for evaluating and rewarding its dealers in terms of marketing strategy implementation. The

How political dynasty apes brand marketing

By Minyong Cirineo
Contributor

A LAW AGAINST POLITICAL DYNASTY is anachronistic in a democracy where electoral laws and human rights are fundamentals for constituency. Political succession in a democracy differs from succession in solitary form of government.

In a monarchial rule, succession is enforced automatically by the closest degree of blood consanguinity (It's silsilah/affair).

In our society, now re-tooled by amazing breakthrough of information technology powered by human capital in times (Socrates) Internet and media take over as the convergent power evident. This happened during Typhoon Ondoy when television, radio, mobile phones and computers prompted an incompetent government in the information gathering, mobilization for rescue, fund raising appeal and relief distribution.

A similar thing happened in the 2010 elections. Mass media are in control in determining the choice of candidates with voluminous TV commercials.

Modern business partners, the marketing and advertising companies, comprise the power catalysts in influencing the voter's decision making process in choosing candidates.

Politicians employ the professional help of advertising creative teams to define their campaign strategy and to craft their advertising messages. Look at all the TV ads for politicians. They all smile, swim and spark like toothpaste ads.

In marketing terms, political dynasties (Aquinos, Sumulongs, Marcoses, Aquinos, etc.) correspond to established consumer brands (Colgate toothpaste, Tide detergents, Nescafe instant coffee, Lucky Me noodles). Branded products and political dynasties employ the same marketing techniques to maximize eventuality and dominance in the consumer's memory and patronage.

The dynamics for generating market share (voter garnering) are similar.

Brand promise is achieved by:

a) top of mind brand awareness (candidate's popularity);

b) widest brand distribution in sales outlets (candidate's frequent appearances in civic and social events and plentiful sponsorship if it is public works billboards);

c) perceive good product quality (candidate is approachable, sociable, helpful, and a good orator); and

d) brand is revitalized by launching new product variants (wife, daughter, son, grandchildren, cousins, in laws) on for election post (ring.)

The success of political dynasties is driven by mathematical and sociological forces. The late president Ferdinand Marcos, pride of Ilocandia, married the beauteous Imelda Romualdez of Leyte that resulted in continuing homogenous Ilocano votes of the Romuldez and the Marcos.

Pride of ownership (kinship or regionalism) is consistently displayed by Cebuanos when an Osmeña runs for a national office. The brand Osmeña was launched by the late Don Sergio Osmeña Jr. when he emerged as the LP/90s as a nationalist during the centrist-socialist government.

Party loyalty is inherent role in political dynasties. It transfers from one generation to another. Cleavers are Cojuangcos and Abercia campaigning for Mar Roxas are also descendants of ward leaders who supported the late president Manuel Roxas, Mar's grandfather and the late senator Serging Osmeña, Mar's father.

The Lacsons and Reyes of Batangas, Negrenses of Eliol are some of the pioneering national brands with long shelf life. Some of the regional brands, alive and kicking today are the Binaysons of Lanao, the Plazas of Bicolnia, the Dimpar of La Union, the Singsons of Ilocos, the Chipecos and two Lucas of Laguna. Our political landscape is littered with political dynasties, including the hegemonic Singaporean of Magsaysaysans.

I doubt if we can fight the realities in political dynasties.

Filipinos embrace plentiful salient dynastic values such as close personal and regional kinship, common dialect, pride of ownership and inherited loyalties. These sociological factors breed political dynasties and it's difficult to separate the chaff from the grain.

The core is on re-constructing 'ish trust against the social maturity, enlightenment and the ability to use critical thinking when we vote. It's the only way to dissolve the cultural factors that breed political dynasties.

From keeping leaks off the streets, to distributing potable water to your taps, **Manila Water** has come to be recognized as the world leader in water efficiency.

Global water industry experts have unanimously voted **Manila Water** as the **"Water Efficiency Project of the Year"** through the UK-based publication, Global Water Intelligence (GWI).

Besting other international organizations, **Manila Water** has shown that, once again, the Filipino can excel.

Manila Water's Ferdi Rivera accepts the 2010 Global Water Award from Her Majesty, Queen Rania of Jordan in Paris, France.

Manila Water

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BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

30-year-old Post-it sticks it to competitors

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

DOING. Brunet with some members of the 3M management team in the Philippines.

MARKETING MAN Don Brunet can still remember how difficult it was in 1980 to convince individuals and companies to buy the Post-it notes developed by inventors Art Fry and Spencer Silver at the laboratory of 3M in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Potential buyers thought then that at $1.75 per pad, the creamy yellow 2 by 3-inch Post-it notes (originally named Press and Peel Notes) were just too expensive compared to the ordinary, non-stick scratch pads that went for just seven US cents.

"They never considered it especially expensive," says Brunet, who was hired as a sales representative for 3M the month Post-it was developed to go out to different parts of the United States and push the sales of the sticky notes, such that the companies that did buy the Post-it notes reserved them for the top executives with the corner offices.

But convinced that the convenience of using Post-it notes would make up for the considerable price difference, 3M went ahead and doggedly went after office supply and fortune 500 companies, convincing them to try out the product and experience the benefits themselves.

The thinking was that Post-it would sell itself as soon as people got to actually try them.

And the 3M management and sales and marketing team weren't wrong, as Post-it has become an indispensable part of everyday life, and as much a fixture of the office table as a stapler and ballpoint pen.

"Post-it has changed the way people communicated, because communication changed from formal to informal, and it became more personal," says Brunet, who has spent most of his working years with 3M and is now International Director for Asia Pacific of 3M Consumer and Office Business.

Brunet explains that in the 1980s, communication among colleagues was largely confined to formal office memos, and it took a while to get attuned.

But with a Post-it stuck on the memo, the person concerned can immediately respond without re-writing the original document.

Brunet says using the Post-it note is just more convenient than using a paper clip, stapler and a scratch pad, as discovered by Silver and Fry who first used Post-it to mark the pages of a hymnal during church services.

Convenience was the primary message that Brunet and the original sales force carried when they went from door to door, office to office to seek access to Boss, Madre to market Post-it.

Product sampling was to successful that, 30 years later, 200 staff orders linearly on this sales tactic to push Post-it, which has changed considerably from the time the first pads were rolled off the factory in 1980 to keep up with the changing preferences and habits of users.

According to Brunet, who retired the Philippines recently to check local operations, people no longer use Post-it to communicate with each other as much as they can it to remind themselves of things to do, or to organize their documents and files.

Technological developments such as cellular phones, electronic mail and instant messaging have taken care of direct communications, so Post-it had to evolve accordingly, coming up with super sticky notes so that notes containing personal reminders could be stuck anywhere. There are also Post-it Flags for marking, tabbing and indexing documents, and the Big Post-it Easel Pads for writing down that next big idea.

The sizes and shapes likewise had to change since companies and individuals now use different colors of Post-it to denote different facets of their busy life—like small, yellow notes for the home, big, pink and lined notes for the office and rectangular green notes for school.

Also, however, largely sticks to the canary yellow notes while avoiders tend more to lasers colors.

Also in keeping with the march toward a more sustainable lifestyle, 3M rolled out in 2007 its Post-it recycled notes that use recyclable fibers and 30% post-consumer adhesives. Then last year, it came up with its removable labels and Post-it writing tools that combine a pen, highlighter and marker in a single package.

"We have to constantly change to stay relevant to the consumer," says Brunet, adding that 3M cannot rely on the success of Post-it over the past 30 years to ensure its continued existence over the next 30.

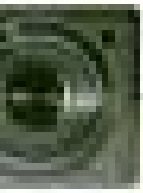
A 1998 Gallup study estimates that an average US professional gets 11 Post-it notes a day.

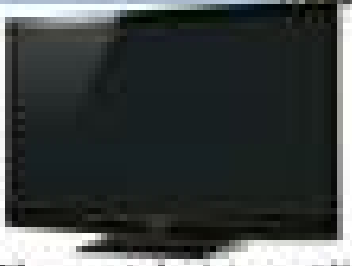
INFOTECH

Samsung whets appetite for apps

Point-and-shoot makes no compro

Fujitsu expands target verticals





Plasma television still couch potato's choice

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BUSINESS Monday

LEADERS Four government and business execs come together for a landmark discussion convened by Philips Lighting on a case-forming Metro Manila bet as a global hub which is liveable, sustainable and investable. Leading the roundtable are (from left) Architect Felino Palafox, Philips Lighting Senior Vice President Olivier Pic and Chairman Dewangan of Chairman Dewangan Lighting Design.

Bulbs show the way to a brighter future

By Jerry R. Nieves

HOW DO YOU LEAVE A BETTER AND greener planet for your children and future grandchildren?

Using energy efficient lighting solutions may be the best, according to top architect Felino "Jun" Palafox and officials of Philips Lighting.

At a recent industry roundtable discussion, both Philips and Palafox appealed to the Philippine government and local private companies to adopt the so-called intelligent lighting solutions to drive urban development and enhance public safety in the country.

"By migrating to the latest efficient lighting technologies, city planners will be able to improve the cities landscape, enhance public comfort and better manage energy consumption in the Philippines."

Palafox explains.

"This is a triple win and will go a long way in improving the 'liveability' quotient of cities and making them more attractive to business. It will also help reduce energy consumption, and help save money," Palafox adds.

By using energy efficient lighting solutions, the country can reduce power demand and quality of impacts, make the cities more appealing to business facilities and help mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. The amount that can be saved can then be used for other projects and infrastructure needs.

Switching to CFLs

According to Philips, the Philippine government had decided at the end of the last decade that its cities have a pressing need for more energy efficient lighting solutions to match the urban growth taking place.

"The country made great headway in the very first wave country to plan a nationwide placement of incandescent lights, aiming to replace them with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) by the beginning of 2009," Philips says.

"It was hoped that this would reduce the impact of climate change and lead to its projected drop in carbon emissions and energy costs at households," the company adds.

With partnerships formed among the government, non-government organizations, multinational agencies like the Asian Development Bank and lighting experts such as Philips, the Philippines began a multi-scale incandescent lighting phase-out projects and energy-conservation implementation of campaigns.

Among the projects to be implemented under the Philippine Energy Efficiency Project (PEEP) was the distribution of 15 million CFLs to replace the less efficient incandescent bulbs.

But while thousands of families have already received these solutions, Philips says that more awareness has yet to be reached—especially those undergoing massive urbanization. The country remains far from being incandescent-free, it adds.

Energy efficiency future

According to Philips, there is an industry consensus that lighting solutions that use light emitting diodes (LED) will soon play an increasingly important role in improving the quality and reducing the energy consumption and cost of indoor and public street lighting.

"LED lights are more than twice as efficient as compact fluorescent bulbs, meaning is the standard for general lighting. LEDs are as little as one-tenth the power of an incandescent bulb and can last for up to 20 years of normal use," Philips explains.

The study titled "Life Cycle Assessment of Streetlight Technologies" by Rensselaer Center for Sustainable Innovation suggested that electricity savings from LED lighting would offset negative environmental impacts of the LED manufacturing process by a factor of 6:1.

This means that every rebate spends $4.2 million annually on electricity and street light maintenance, would save $1 million each year in energy costs and $700,000 in maintenance costs with LED lighting.

Philips could not stress enough the need to use intelligent lighting solutions, as it disclosed that up to 50 percent of a municipality's energy spending goes to lighting.

In the context of mega cities, lighting consumes 19 percent of all the electricity generated worldwide and lighting-related electricity consumption can be expected to double over the next 15 years, in mega cities.

Such statistics already highlight the significant role intelligent lighting solutions can play in making cities across the world and in less resource and energy efficient.

MOVEMENTS

Apresa names new board

The Asian Public Real Estate Association (APREA) has named a new board following its recent annual general meeting.

Jaime Ysmael of Ayala Land Inc. was re-elected as president and John Lee of ARA Asset Management was re-elected as executive vice president.

APREA's executive committee is composed of President: Jaime Ysmael, Ayala Land Inc.; Senior Vice President: John Lee, Ara Asset Management Pte Ltd; Vice President: Graham Cooper, AMP Capital Investors; Vice President: Steven Sullivan, ARA Asset Management (China) Co. Ltd.; Secretary General: Richard Wee, Bartlett; Vice President: Alfred Liu, SBI Global Asset Management; Global Real Estate Advisory Treasurer: Dominic Fenwick, Whitfield Group; Honorary Secretary: Philip Lawrence, Blackstone Group (HK) Ltd.

Other appointments to the Executive Committee are: APAC Property Group: Philip Lawrence, Blackstone Group (HK) Ltd; Luke Sullivan, Lehman Brothers; Christopher Tang, Fortune Metropolitan Investment Ltd.; Jayashankar Muthukrishnan, HDIL Financial Services Private Ltd.; Brett Shoolbraid, MGPA Pinakay Jain, Parsvnath Developers Ltd.; Ajay Sidhaye, Principal Global Investors; and Rik Vanrolleghem, ProLogis.

DHL Express has new manager

DHL, the no. 1 in the logistics industry, has appointed Duncan Gates as Country Manager for DHL Express Philippines.

As country manager, Duncan will be responsible for the general management of performance, operations, and commercial activities of the business unit in the Philippines.

This includes the development of the sales process, business, accounting/customs objectives, ensuring robust growth, leading customer, market leadership and the continuance of the industry-leading service standards.

In a previous role as Deputy Country Manager for Indonesia based in Jakarta in 2007, Duncan was instrumental in driving the DHL First Choice program, a customer-centric quality program aimed at all being positive business impact through continuous process improvement.

Duncan began his career with DHL more than 10 years ago and has since held various marketing and sales positions in Sydney, Dubai and Singapore.

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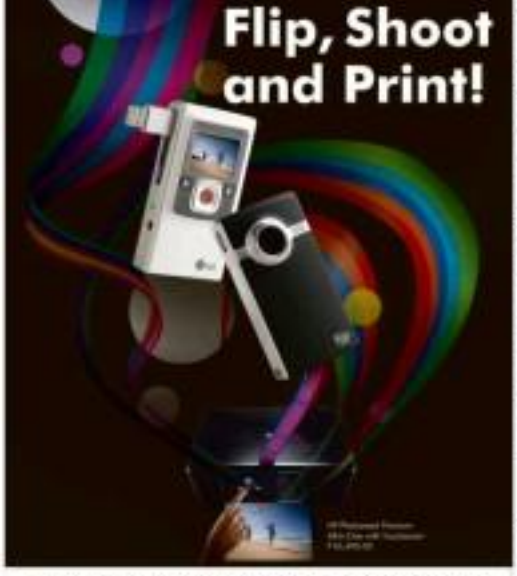

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Manansala Centennial at the Met Museum

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THE METROPOLITAN Museum of Manila celebrates Heritage Month with a major exhibition, "Si Mang Isteng... Inventaryong Manansala."

This year marks the birth centennial of Vicente Manansala (1910-1981), whose outstanding contributions to the enrichment of the Philippines' cultural heritage was recognized with a posthumous National Artist award in 1981.

Although known for developing his own artistic style called "transparent cubism," which combined local and folk imagery, Manansala created a large body of works that showed bold and diverse explorations which materials, techniques and subject matter.

"Si Mang Isteng... Inventaryong Manansala" presents a fuller dimension of the artist's uniqueness and excellence by bringing his masterful works with lavishly assembled, watercolor and viewpoints from his colleagues, peers, patrons and followers with whom he closely, spent deep, personal friendships.

By celebrating Manansala's persona—a man of his time who shined at his best when subconsciously embodied the quintessential and unorthodox Filipino—the exhibit hopes to enrich the public's current encounters with his artworks. About 70 Manansalas from private collections will be featured in the exhibit, on view at the Yuchengco Gallery 5th floor, Makati.

Side by side with the Manansala show is a tribute exhibit by four artists at the White Cube Gallery, "Pagpupugay kay Isteng: Gay Ilham, Ibarra, Manansala." The show features artistic works of figurative Gay Romualo Ilham, Edgar Doruelo—colleagues, painting buddies and close friends of Manansala, and Berna Manansala, the artist's granddaughter.

They reveal the many influences Manansala had on their artmaking...from technique to art philosophy, to crucial life values such as self-discipline and excellent standards. "Pagpupugay kay Isteng" opens also on May 20 and will be on view until July 18.

Both exhibits are co-presented by the Filipino Heritage Festival Inc. and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and co-organized by the Friends of Manansala.

Collateral activities such as lectures and workshops are scheduled for the duration of the exhibits.

The Metropolitan Museum is at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Museum days are Monday to Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. For inquiries, call 5215137 and 5217930, or e-mail info@metropolitan.ph.

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Before Limasawa, there was Homonhon

By Teresa Gomez III
Contributor

IF IT COULD BE shown that the first Mass in the Philippines was celebrated not on Easter Sunday, March 31, 1521, and not in either of the contending venues of Butuan City and Southern Leyte, then the long-running historical controversy between the Mazaua District and Limasawa Island, each claiming bragging rights and celebratory fame, shall have been, indeed, for naught!

It is my contention that there has been an evident failure in historiographic deduction and interpretation regarding the celebration of "a Mass in Limasawa on that fateful Sunday" (which is a fact beyond correct), but to the neglect, exclusion and abandonment

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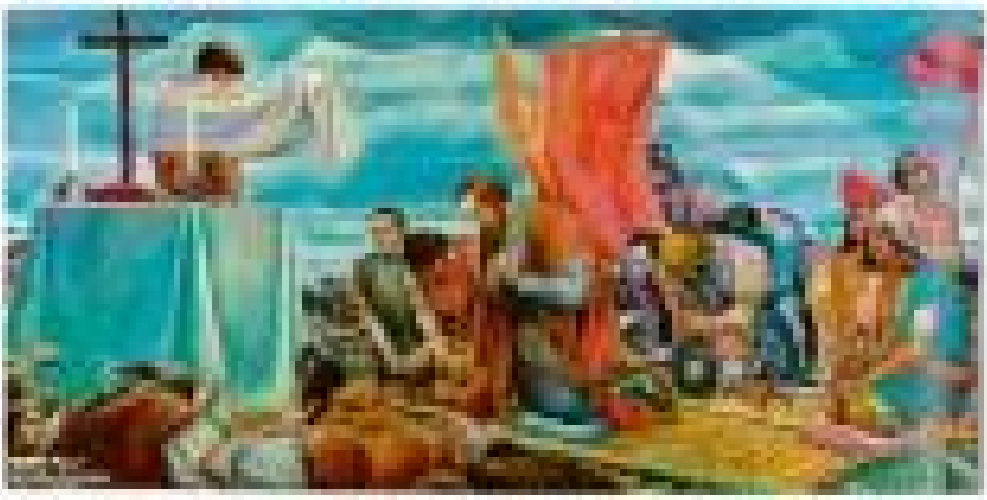
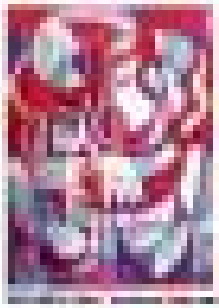
Before Limasawa, there was Homonhon

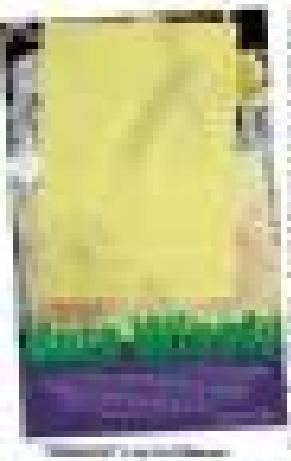


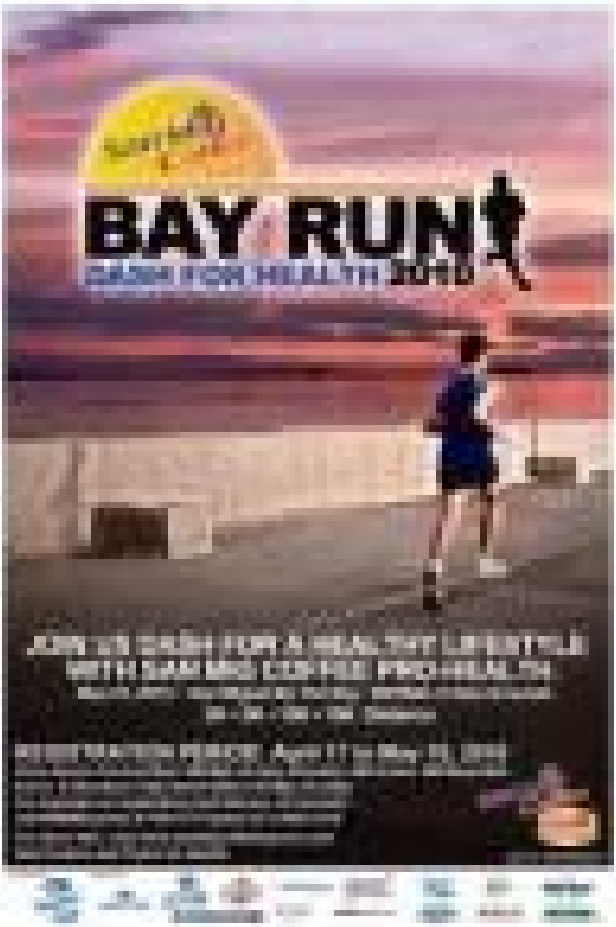
Historians err in calling Limasawa the site of the first Mass in the Philippines. Even Pigafetta didn't make such claim

Powerful political art in 'Tigmas'



Makati's 'Dekalogo' visualized by key artists





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New gallery holds inaugural exhibit

ATRO MUNDO IS A GALLERY dedicated to the promotion of established and emergent Filipino artists through selective exhibitions, innovative expressions, international art fairs, and linkages and collaboration with prestigious international galleries.

Atro Mundo will provide space for works by multidisciplinary artists from here and abroad.

"LOKLOK Bayugis," by Mario de Rivera

"SAKDYL and Whites," by Dhida Gabrosa Tuyat

"One pléiade d'antiques" is Atro Mundo's maiden exhibition. It features the works of seven established Filipino artists. "Pléiade," in Greek mythology, means a constellation of seven stars. In literary history, it is the name given to the seven austere poets of Alexandria who lived during 300 BC. In French literature, it pertains to the seven great poets of the French Renaissance. Today, "pléiade" means a group of individuals remarkable in their respective fields.

"One pléiade d'antiques" opens on May 20 at Atro Mundo, 7/L, Greenbelt 5, Makati City. Featured artists include Gelsey Dalandan, Norberto Carandang, Roberto Feleo, Jill de Jesus, Romulo Galicano, Nicanor Gruz, Julie Lluch, Oliver Valmero Tuyat, Marco Oliario Viohales, Fernando Sepulveda, Zigbal Rotor, Mario de Rivera, Ramon Orlina, Andro Hayata and Bienvenido Modesto.

"HINDICAPES: Curtain Call," by Justin Hayata

"THE HIGHARTS," by John Lloch

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PPO finds a new music director

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

THE CULTURAL CENTER OF the Philippines' search for a new music director for the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO) is over. It has engaged the expertise of young American conductor, Olivier Ochanine, who was one of those who went through live auditions.

Ochanine is pursuing a doctorate degree in Conducting at the Claremont College Conservatory of Music, after finishing graduate work in Orchestral Conducting at University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music.

It will be recalled that the PPO had conducted a search for the position some time ago. With the death of Corinto Rizzolli, PPO resident conductor, some of the country's young conductors were engaged as resident conductors by turns, until the new music director was named.

In September, when the PPO's concert season opens, Ochanine will assume the task as lucky unveiled by the orchestra for its season's beginning. PPO's program would especially greatly improve, and PPO's listeners role in raising

PHOTO

Lisa Macuja performs Giselle

PRIMA BALLERINA LISA MACUJA-Elizalde performs one of her favorite roles—and one of classical ballet's most beloved heroines—"Giselle." The ever-popular production by Ballet Manila, as presented by the Manila Broadcasting Company, will be held on May 29, 7:30 p.m., and on May 30, 3 p.m. at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex, Pasay City.

LISA TO

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Remembering the Swans of ballet

By Pablo A. Tariman
Cook Books

ONCE UPON A TIME there were maidens who thought they could be swans. They brooded by the lake and imagined how it would be to wade through the water like birds poised for flight. It was unthinkable, as many of them thought.

Night and day they honed their bodies to be able to prepare the illusion of flying. Others learned how to float like spirits inhabiting the domain of the dead. In time their feet developed blisters, and their muscles ached every single night. The few times they thought they could fly but failed, they started all over again, finally performing the art of gliding and soaring into space.

They learned to defy time and space and become awe-inspiring creatures that allure the dance audience over the world.

In Manila's ballet-conscious locale forward to see another spectacular visit of The Swans of Russian Ballet (July 18 at Aliw Theater), let's look back to the various subjects, the storied carriage and admired immortal dancers.

Yuka Murishita

"There was a time when I thought humans who tried to look like swans were being ridiculous. But when I saw Yuka of these swans dancing in perfect alignment to the music of Tchaikovsky, I felt endlessly enchanted.

I didn't want to leave the theater. I felt for the dream Queens who fell in love with The Prince who fought it out with the evil brilliant just to deserve the most adorned suitor human.

The swans are symbols of purity and innocence most humans battle to soar. The white beauty conducts purity of spirit and the Art & adagio of "Swan Lake" reflects this pristine style.

In Act II, however, there is the scheming Black Swans that outlined Rothbart's spell pushed by the evil Rothbart the deform the 31 hunters like whipping mens of care big-odds-supplanted by the school in that heavens part of the ballet which always has audiences cheering and applauding in end.

But as in all parables of good and evil, the White Swans rules in the end and the Black Swans promptly vanishes into the realm of the forgotten.

Lisa Macuja-Elizalde as Odette in "Swan Lake." She learned ballerina Russian women in home but art.

The epitome of the perfect swans to me is Japanese prima Yuka Murishita. When she debuted as the dual character Odette-Odile in the CCP many years ago, I thought a human version was never more perfect. In her unsurpassed audiences were rave reviews in the making. Lisa Macuja and Anna Minsilidal.

Platon Barredo

Mendoza's dancing so betrothed the new young Filipino dancers that in due time they themselves would dance the role on the same stage with as much intensity and fervors, recalling another Swans of contemporaries, our own Marites Barredo.

Lisa Macuja

Our local swans are examples of acclaimed spirits who defied all the odds against their art. Lisa Macuja Elizalde survived Bicutal's terrible setback to have her art. She was preparing for a role in "Don Q" when her acute knodes clashed she couldn't go home.

Natalia Makarova

The other Swan who told me tales of loneliness in a foreign land was Natalia Makarova who, like Baryshnikov and Nureyev, hopped to Freedom by defecting to the West.

At a press conference held in 1979—on the stage of the CCP's Main Theater, Lia Makarova told me she wanted to dance without restriction and defection was the only way out.

But Makarova's career was cut short by an accident. She was injured when a stage set fell on her while she was rehearsing for another Swan role.

Plisetskaya

Plisetskaya was pushing 60 when she danced "La Bete Malade" with "Dying Swan" as her finale numbers in Manila. Her audience raved wild and wouldn't stop applauding.

In years after that performance, my daughter and I would talk about the incredible night of Plisetskaya in the dying swan, making ripples with her arms.

Of her dancing, the late choreographer Eric Ona said: "Her 'Dying Swan' is such supreme artistry that even though she rehearsed it only once practically dazed, unconvincing like swans in thought there were no bones underneath, her inedible movements were unbelievable. One can, indeed, feel the agony and pain she endures as a dying bird. She has an equal, indeed."

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By the way it was in Cuba that Elizalde debuted as Odette-Odile in "Swan Lake" to four-day stand when the Brazilian Swan couldn't make it.

When The Stars of Russian Ballet are here in Manila on July 16 to share the stage with dancers of Ballet Manila, let's see that swans in pair tribute to The Swans who have transcended their human forms to become symbols of excellence in dance art.

For inquiries on the July 16 performance of The Stars of Russian Ballet, please call TicketWorld at 891-9999.

Lisa Macuja performs Giselle

Lisa Macuja-Elizalde goes to classic "Giselle" one year after they nearly dubbed her in to one of four Dames the classical ballet.

From page D1

"Giselle" is part of Lisa's year-long celebration of her 25th anniversary as a professional ballerina. The last time she portrayed this role was in 2005. It is easy role that she has trained dancing.

"It is one of the most dramatic ballets that a ballerina can be privileged enough to dance in, and also one of the most exhilarating roles. It's a story of love so strong that it causes a girl's insidious and death. It also causes fate to stop between the grave and save the man who betrayed her," Macuja said.

Giselle is a peasant girl who falls in love with Albrecht, a hunting prince. When she finds out that she has been lied on, she dies of grief. In the second act, Albrecht visits her grave to beg her forgiveness. Giselle has become one with the Wilis, the souls of girls who died from grief and heartache. The Wilis represent Albrecht, and command him to dance until the dies of exhaustion. Giselle pleads for him and dances in his place until the sun comes up and the Wilis must return to their graves.

"It is one of the most poignant roles I've ever danced," Macuja said. "It demands the utmost energy and acting ability, because even when Giselle is dancing enormously difficult parts, the ballerina must make it look like she's a spirit floating lightly on air. You're supposed to convey weightlessness."

"Giselle" is significant for Macuja, as it was to its full length production that she had her first soloist role as a member of the Kiev Ballet in 1984. She danced then as the Peasant Pas Deux girl in Act 1. Her first performance upon coming home from Russia was as Giselle, where the ballet's Act 2 was presented at the Metropolitan Theater.

In that show, she danced opposite Nanoy Nicolas, with Odine Barrios directing his supporting role of Hilarion. The two classmates would later become two of his most enduring partners.

Ballet Manila's production of "Giselle" is made even more special with the participation of actress Chin Chin Gutierrez as the Duchess Bathilde, who makes up the love triangle with Giselle and Albrecht. Alternating as Lisa's Albrecht are soloists Rudy de Dios and Noser Indjadis, who are dancing the ball "Giselle" for the first time.

"Giselle" is a benefit for Project Ballet Pumera, Ballet Manila's scholarship program for poor kids.

The program currently has 40 scholars who are given ballet training and equipment, meals and vitamins and supplementary nourishment.

For ticket inquiries, call Ballet Manila at 400-0282 or 525-5967 or Ticketworld at 891-9999; e-mail tix@ballet manila.ph; or visit the website www.ballet manila.ph or www.ticketworld.com.ph.

'Bravo!' brings back well-loved OPM tunes

By Karina Bolasi Santiago
Contributor

THERE'S NO REASON TO say no to a Jaime Zobel de Ayala event. And so, to the hour of an open-air venue for "Bravo! Songs for Every Filipino," there I was in smart casual wear, ready for another classical Pinoy music concert.

I almost choked when Sarah Geronimo, my name not wrong, with other young belters Rachel Alejandro, Jed Madela, Aiza Seguerra, Jolo Jones, and Alma Pegollo and Jay Pangan. They started with an interesting medley of love songs, hosted ed by "Sy, ay, ay, Pop Ong," made up of classics like "Mandaluka Sila Kaya " to "Bangako sa "Ito." They chose Joel Lorenzo Ocampo as musical director. I wouldn't expect anything less than wonderful.

Since for the quick that didn't do the music justice, and which in the hands of a good songwriter wouldn't have sounded so cliché, here was a show that should be treated across the country with music that should be made into an album.

The genius here isn't just Ocampo's as it is Mel Villena, Homer Flores and Vhon Tecson's musical arrangements for medleys that were witty and fun, and, (sure enough-enough, tells story of love, as they do of the Pinoy love song.

The more conventional medleys about love, in reminiscence and the iconic O medley were sung by Geronimo and Madela and it came so respectively, and seemed to be more about her singing that the songs themselves. But the songs in medleys that didn't have favorites were the ones that should be in an album, individually and together, because it was here that there was laughter and happiness, as there was sex and absurdity. Here was Freddie's genius.

Of love across OPM

The heartbreakers of love songs for the most part and self-deprecating. Tony Gonzales "Malayo pa Sila"); Isaac mode Cipio's "Mahirap Magmahal ng Byuta ng Iba"); climbing and barbaric acoustic (Eraserheads' "Ang Ito"); and April Boy Regino's "Di Ko Kayo Tanggapin" (complete with Jolo's over the head fainting (he loves it) and "Ikaw (Ang Ang, Mundo ang Gumawa Sa).

That assimilation alone would be horrid in the hands of an amateur in the hands of Villena and Ocampo, it was just funny and fun, a story in itself as told by Pangan, Madela and Jones.

The girls, of course, wouldn't be outdone, and without favoritism the three girls would make this show theirs in their own kinds-talented medley.

Here, Villena puts together Angel Malik," Claire de la Fuente's "Inspirasyon," Regine Velasquez's "Salbar" and Sharon Cuneta's "Bahid" (Ating Udigan Ka)." What it produces is not just funny, but a revelation in three-singers.

Fuji held her own despite being a last-pop/commercial diva. Or was unexpectedly fabulous live without those idiot breaks she obviously makes on TV.

And then there was Chita, who practically exorcised the laughter this medley required, who has just joined the roster of underrated and underestimated female singers, arguably the greatest of the 80s to better-sold, commercially manufactured younger divas. It's all a drama really.

No cliches

But there was nothing to be ashamed of here, where the love-lost-and medley arranged by maestro dulce simply means gospel, and turned into a soulful anthem of Gary V's "Shout for Joy" and Rainbow's "Hallelujah."

Here, where the love-for-nation medley and its contingent medley by Homer was easy to bite into and swallow, because the clichés of Cayetano original-Pilipinas" and Dodjie Simon's "Isang Dugong, Isang Lahi, Isang Mundo" were made contemporary. How else? Why by pasting in The Censo's "Isang Bangka Kaya" (sung by Dengue equals gonorrhea/sipa); Francis Magalona's anthem "Mga Kababayan;" and what do you know, even Lito Lapid's unexpected Delaney Sequeira-sung/"Labing Pitong Taon Ng" where live actors lovelorn clad and she couldn't go home.

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PPO finds a new music director

Front page D1

the standard of symphonic music in the country would continue frustration.

It is normally the conductor orchestra the musical personality of the orchestra, and, hopefully being young, Orbaniz will infuse the hallmark of excellence and dynamism.

New arrangement

Manila music-lovers welcomed the announcement made by CCP president Isabel Pilares, who introduced the ensemble conductor during 2005's last engagement recently at the CCP Main Theater, where he was the featured conductor.

The announcement was made after the PPO had played the national anthem to a conclusion. It was PPO's impressible feat at "open-playing" that announced the radio wonderkin.

In his response, Orbaniz announced his hearty commitment to the orchestra.

A new arrangement of the PPO, in the sense that it radically departed from the usual arrangement in the previous season, was in one word.

Very obvious was the separation of the second violins from the first violins. The former were placed directly opposite the cellos, which were now placed adjacent to the first violins, with the double basses at the back. The viola section sat adjacent to the second violins on the right side of the stage.

The arrangement was not effective as the separation weakened the sounds of the violins, which are supposed to be the backbone of the orchestra.

The second violins played with the "usual beds" (also known as the "I hate" which connotes the sound of the violin turned away from the audience, and violins) faced the brasses, thus projecting the sound inward to the shell, not outside of it toward the audience.

Quite a tall

This reserved quite a toll in the Dmitri Shostakovich symphonic war hero, Symphony No.5 in D Minor, Op. 47.

Without its four movements, this work is one of the composer's well-liked compositions, played frequently in symphonic concerts. The majority of its first movement, the melodiousness of the second, the spectacle of the third, and the unending power of the fourth movement all make up the grandeur and dolorous charm of the piece.

In the fourth movement, the brasses shouted the strings, especially the violins whose sound was greatly diminished due to their unfortunate positioning as pointed out above.

The PPO is no stranger to this piece, having played this symphony in its second concert in 1992 under a venerable guest conductor. He had also shared the position of the maestrazo. However, he repositioned only the brasses. They were placed in an oblique position, curving the right angle of the concert shell, and were made to face the violins to achieve balance of tone.

The result was great, as I pointed out there. The conductor's "supreme sense of tonal balance" totally ensured full attention.

That venerable conductor earned the admiration not only of Manila's music lovers but of the orchestra's musicians as well. He was invited many times to guest-conduct the PPO.

Young Artists' Dance Camp for aspiring dancers and performers

THE CULTURAL CENTER OF the Philippines Dance School of leading dance company Ballet Philippines will be holding the Young Artists' Dance Camp in Arts in the City Fun Festivities (Global City, beginning today. It will run for three weeks, and, for the ninth year, the event promises an exciting time of learning one's craft through comprehensive training in general dance education and related art fields.

The camp will offer classes in Hip-hop, Jazz, Musical Theater, Contemporary Dance/Creative Movement and Visual Art Basics for children ages 7-9 and 10-12, with little or no dance background. This will give young people a platform for self-expression and a positive environment where they can be with peers who share the same passion for the arts.

As the premier dance company, Ballet Philippines has been playing a very active role in fostering enthusiasm in the country for the past 40 years. Other program offerings include the CCP Summer Dance Workshop, Begin-ner year-round classes, the Regional Dance Workshop, the Teachers and Choreographers' Training Program, Countless Ballet Philippines artists and alumni are now leading dancers and dance professionals here and abroad.

For inquiries, call 832-3660, 889-3020 or 300-3064.

'Harana' tours the Visayas

FLORENCE Aguilar in an Ignacio outfit by Mumler

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL international show in the Netherlands last year where the group received three standing ovations at the Compagnie Theater in Amsterdam, "Harana" will venture on its first Visayas Tour on May 17-30 as part of the National Heritage Festival celebrations.

"Harana" features the country's highly celebrated singers Basil Gumtow, Flo. Grace Aguilar, Adriano Lopez-Tuvera, Jennifer Milligan, Glenmin Sutton, Miguel Cervantes and Wenn Sobrado.

When the show was launched last 2008, it enveloped women chorus both audiences and critics. "How long have we waited for such an enchanting piece of artistic delightful entertainment," said Jullie Yap Daza in her column on the Manila Bulletin.

"Harana" has generated prolonged, standing applause," noted Rosalita Orosa in her column in Philippine Star.

Aiming early to the traditional form of courtship where a man woos a woman affection by singing underneath her window.

'Harana' is unique

The country is rapidly losing the value of Philippine music to foreign influences. Many people are no longer interested in listening to Filipino classics, composed by gifted Filipino composers.

In the 1920s, the harana or kundiman became a mainstream musical style with many popular performers including Leocadio Feliciano and Ruben Tagalog performing it.

Philippine Opera Company's cultural repertoire showcases the evolution of Philippine music through song, movement and drama. The show consists of six suites—the Ignoy, Maria Clara, Rural, Folk, Muslim and the Contemporary—each thematically presented with authentic costumes and visual excitement. The creation of each suite is a product of thorough research, with the commitment to preserve indigenous music, dance and tradition. POC's skill is evident in it entertainers and enhances this research to modernize colors of great appeal to theater. Contemporary audiences will find the performances as absolute feast to the senses.

Repertoire for this Visayas tour includes timeless classics like "Pahimug Mabilis," "Dahil Sa Isang Bulaklak," "Iyo Kadan Pa Man," "Kalesa," "Ang Mayo," "Nasa Kisa Ang Kapalaran," "Usahay," "Ay Ushiyamay," "Mayon Apicao," "Sa Kabukiran," "Maning Bulo," "Si Ta Ca Pung Singking," "Pulong Alimbuyao," "Sana Di Nlm Kumawin," "Unang Sa Buto Kundiol," "Dudut" and "Hud Hud Mutipot."

"Harana" will be shown in SM City Iloilo (May 18), Bohol Cultural Center (May 21), SM City Bohu (May 23), CAP Auditorium in Antique (May 25), Capiz Gym (May 27) and Plaza in Puerto (May 29).

"Harana" Visayas tour is produced in cooperation with the Filipino Heritage Festival Foundation and National Commission for the Culture and the Arts.

For inquiries, call Philippine Opera Company at 09287798 or log on to www.philippineoperacompany.com

Famous Italian violinist...

From page D1

Leonidas Pocaroi and with Silvano Revelli will commemorate the occasion by hosting a gala concert of Italy's best and reputedly most virtuoso violinist Uto Ughi, accompanied by another accomplished musician, pianist Alessandro Specchi.

The last, top-notch showcase of Italian artistry and vivacity is open for all music lovers and society members to experience. The breathtaking lineup includes all three movements of Beethoven's long and intensely emotional "Sonata op. 47 in La Maggiore," better known as the "Kreutzer" Sonata, the darkly-sweet "Sonatas En Trio del Diavolo op. 20" by Wieniawski, the most familiar, brisk etude from Paganini, entitled "La Campanella", and "Fate, chapone i fiori" by Camille Saint-Saens.

Indeed a fitting welcome and treat to a flourishing culture!

"Programmes von Ann Hoppo-Gingco 2007" featuring Uto Ughi and Alessandro Specchi at the Tagaytay Picnic Grove Amphitheater, CCP Main Theater is open to the public. Tickets are now on sale, first-served basis through the CCP office. Call 832-1125 loc. 1900 (Main Office). Formal dress code is applied. Show starts at 8:00 p.m.

Famous Italian violinist, Uto Ughi to perform in Manila

FASHION, FASHION, AND A great sale for life—there's certainly more than meets the eye when it comes to what we Filipinos share with the country of Italy. Not surprisingly, the nation seems to hold fine and true even in the realm of diplomatic affairs, especially with the introduction of Italy's newest ambassador to the Philippines, Ms Luisa Bassadi.

Backed up by nearly four decades of service and experience in international relations, the Argentina-born former is no stranger to sharing and has a long, significant list of credentials that make him the perfect choice to complement both our and Italy's rich and colorful culture.

Over the diplomat, he arrives just in time to commemorate their country's annual celebration of Festa della Repubblica, or the Republic Day of Italy, here in his new post. But being Italian, of course, means there'll be more than the usual red, white...

In partnership with Mercuhardi Card Corporation, Ateneo Commercial Corporation, Italian Maritime Academy, Elfeng, Cresswell and Sofitel Philippine Plaza, on June 2, at the Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Ayo...

Cebu International School

The CIS community is looking forward to the future with many new initiatives in place to ensure that the best educational experience is offered to the students from the only internationally accredited school in Cebu.

Moving Forward

Cebu International School is a private secular institution offering a Pre-School to Grade 12 university preparatory international education. CIS is a non-stock, non-profit, self sustaining corporation.

CIS is the only accredited international school in Cebu with a proven track record of students gaining successful entry to overseas universities.

Offering an international curriculum based on the IB philosophy of educating the whole child as a productive member of a larger global community, CIS is actively engaged in a range of activities that involve students, parents and school staff, reaching out to the community outside school.

Awarded the Republic Act 9190 by the Philippine Government, Cebu International School operates to sustain its international nature and employs a multinational administration and faculty.

Visit www.cis.edu.ph or call 4011908 / 40119000 -03 for more details.

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

PEN launches Rony Diaz war novel May 22

A (HOUNDBREAKING) NOVEL by Rony V. Diaz, "At War's End," will be launched on May 22 (Saturday), 5 p.m., at the Solidaridad Bookshop on Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila. Literary critic Elmer A. Ordoñez calls the work "one of the few significant novels in English about the malaise of Philippine society, with its roots in feudal relations."

Published by the Manila Times Book Publications, "At War's End" is the first novel by Rony V. Diaz, who is known for his prize-winning short fiction, which has since been collected in "Death of a Sawmill and Other Stories." His more recent stories appeared in "Stories" and "Philippine Free" anthologies.

Diaz, born in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, on December 2, 1932, was educated at

PEN/CI

Book provides insightful glimpses on Pinoy expat life in Singapore

By Lito Gutierrez
Contributor

MARK PERLAS "SIX DEGREES OF Separation: Uncovering the Lives of Expats in Singapore" presented me a throwback to my time when I myself was, to the early to mid-1980s, an expatriate in Singapore. Manila is of more recent vintage, having arrived in 2007, when the city-state has achieved, in the soccer metaphor so popular among its citizens and residents, Nine. Division one to the global economic arena. When I lived there, Singapore was just emerging, though at a scorching pace, from Third World status.

The title itself is a take on the phrase "six degrees of separation," a literary construct stipulating that, in this shrinking world, anyone anywhere on that planet is six steps, or degrees, or sometimes even fewer, away from having something in common with another person also anywhere on the planet.

Manila does not say much about why she decided to join the diaspora, though it does not take much to figure out why. I even think that she, being a food and travel writer, left for the same professional reasons that I did, which is to make a better living out of our craft. And while the circumstances in Singapore during my time there are now vastly different, the trepidation she described the successful she arrived were pretty much similar to what I felt.

The only difference was that I had a week

BOOK/ E3

GARFIELD

A. UPIN

PUGAD BABOY

DICK TRACY

LOVEHUNTS

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

BABY BLUES

TULDOK

BEN

BIRD MACHINE

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS CRAIG

ARIES (Mar 21 to April 19) This is a wonderful but hectic day. It's also an excellent day for business and purchases. The only downside is that for your spiritual, you might just have no desire to do it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) This is a good day for creative and imaginary pursuits. Have a tendency to go overboard. Keeping things under control.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Another quiet day for you. People may visit unexpectedly, and your sense of humor is a welcome tonic on these occasions. Be sure to avoid alcohol or drugs.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You have much to do on the practical front. Don't let it get to you. Show the world how it's done. You're a good tempered soul.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Your enthusiasm may cause some problems with others. Be careful not to overdo things. Your energy is high, but don't overdo it. Your mood changes often. Be kind to them.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Your plans are working. Others might be unsure, so avoid short cuts or anything dubious to do with the law. Be careful not to overdo things. Your energy is high, but don't overdo it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Your plans are working. Others might be unsure, so avoid short cuts or anything dubious to do with the law. Be careful not to overdo things. Your energy is high, but don't overdo it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Discussions with partners and close friends are upbeat and pleasant today. Get out and socialize. This is a particularly day!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) You are off to a very good start with a lot of help. Co-workers are supportive. Everybody has a good head. Friendly attitude. Your leadership qualities are outstanding.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Allow yourself a little bit more time to get things done. Avoid activities with children and anything that has to do with their behavior. Avoid the entertainment world. Have fun!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Your social skills look very good today. Socialize. If you feel like a book, has good timing. Get together. Be sure. Use discretion. Avoid a cat. A neighbor. Get good!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) This is a wonderful day. Others are quite friendly. Socialize. Invite the whole crew. Parties are in a jolly mood. It's also a good day to eat, drink, coffee, and have fun.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more puzzles and programs visit www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle:

4	9	3	5	7	1	6	8	2
8	5	1	2	4	6	7	3	9
2	7	6	8	3	9	5	1	4
6	3	4	1	2	8	9	7	5
1	2	9	7	6	5	3	4	8
5	8	7	4	9	3	2	6	1
9	6	8	3	1	4	2	5	7
7	4	5	6	8	2	1	9	3
3	1	2	9	5	7	4	8	6

Conceptis Sudoku

3		5						6
		8		2		6		
2	6				1	8		
	9				6		4	7
		7		9	4	5	1	
	4	6			7			5
				5	8		1	4
				7		1	6	
7							8	3

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Book provides insightful. . .

Previous E1

permit, having been wrestled by the Singapore Straits Times, and I had a chauffeur waiting for me at the airport to take me to my hotel. Pineda was going to see a visitor's visa but whose intention was to look for work. I don't know if the immigration officer asked her what the reason for her visit was, and if the officer did, what her response was. Or maybe she did look like a legit tourist.

But her courage and confidence for taking the risk is admirable. As any tito, Pineda has since not only been able to find jobs that suited her academic background and work but also able to set up her own company. And, having been-at-expatriate myself, I am glad that she seems to have satisfied dreams. But in Pineda's writing shows, Singapore is no heaven.

I also admire her journalistic curiosity for zeroing up with the ubiquitous book of beer expatriates. It was an idea that God been broached to me by one of the three editors at the Straits Times and I still have my notes on the folks I interviewed. But the news editors just kept throwing more news assignments at me and I never got to entire my piece. But from my interviews as well as regular social conversations, I could see that expats certainly are an interesting lot, some loved it there; others, particularly some newsroom colleagues, absolutely hated it.

It was this curious assignment lingering at the back of my mind that attracted me to Pineda's book. I was hoping she'd do a good job of each an idea. And she did, in a clever way.

The book is made up of chapters, each about an alien who is either a permanent resident or on temporary assignment. And each chapter has two parts: First, about how the author met the subject, then about the subject himself or herself. The one is multi-ethnic: An American, an Australian, a Frenchman married to a Brazilian, a Japanese, etc.— in a variety of professions...global management consultant, teacher, photographer, designer, etc.

Interview skills

Pineda shows her skills as an interviewer for having drawn out the humanity in each of her subjects. At the same time, she gives us a glimpse of what Singapore is really like as its own.

The sites and the stunning are perfect. And Pineda's ability to find a publisher for her book should inspire determination among young writers. But the writing itself is wanting. And in nine the editing and proofreading.

Pineda has a particular problem with dangling modifiers. Sometimes, living in a flat in one of the high-rises known as HDBs, she was savouring plastic in the hallway not knowing that the water was seeping down to a neighbor's laundry a floor down. The neighbor confronts her and she probably says sorry. "I told her the water was definitely clean," Pineda writes. But "will my trash apart, my apology was not accepted." If Pineda had paid a bit more attention to her grammar lessons, she should have learned that "still my trash apart" does not readily "my apology." She should have written, "Still my trash apart, my apology has did not accept my apology."

Or, "Together with his wife, his foreign postings continued in more-more destinations." It's not hard to discern what Pineda is driving at. But it's not the wife and his foreign postings continuing on to wherever. She should have simply written: "Together with his wife, he continued on to other postings."

Sometimes, a complex sentence does not make sense at all. "After a series of late nights, it was past midnight when I headed to the ladies' room to freshen up." Huh?

There were yes the misspellings. "The reflection staring back at me," is the writes on page 20, should have been "staring back at me." And then again on page 194, she lists the French "hole-lagueroise."

I could go on and on, but I was beginning to feel awful. There was a time when Singaporeans held Filipinos in high regard to whatever's fold, but particularly in journalism. I was hired by the Straits Times because I was provided by a couple of Filipino journalists who had acquitted themselves quite well. I'm afraid that Pineda's book puts that impression in a bit of a cloud.

Apparently, Pineda needs to read more serious literature for a better feel of the texture and rhythm of the language. Her prose is at times it gets away from her. At times, it seems as if she is conditioning her Filipino thoughts into English.

I wouldn't lay all of the book's shortcomings at her feet. Her publishers, Marshall Cavendish, should have assigned her a capable editor. But Pineda's problems are her stories; it's the way she narrates them.

Helpful book on allergies

HELPLORES PUBLISHING Inc. has released "Allergies: Dermatitis, Rhinitis, and Asthma," by Dr. Angela Jane C. Javier, Dr. Ann Paula D.C. Lagrosas and Dr. Conni Joseph C. Uberia.

Almost half of all the people in the world suffer from some form of allergy that harms their health, quality of life and productivity. Among the most common forms of allergy are Atopic Dermatitis, also called skin asthma, Allergic Rhinitis, and Allergic Asthma. Although these allergies affect different areas of the body, their common factor is that they cause inflam-

mation.

In this booklet, leading medical experts discuss the three most common allergic diseases in simple layman language in order to inform the readers of the best ways to diagnose and treat these allergic conditions.

This booklet is the fourth title in the new health series of Milflores Publishing Inc. that aims to provide expert medical information on common diseases and health hazards in affordable prices. The first title was a guide to chronic kidney disease, the second was on anemia and the third book

was on coughing.

The editor of the 602-page health series is Dr. Agnes Dominguez Mejia, current chair of the UP-PGH Department of Medicine and a professor at the UP College of Medicine. She specialized in Nephrology and Hypertension in the US and has won national awards for her work in medical education.

Elbert Tit and Zenaida N. Ebalan designed the cover. Ebalan also did the layout.

"Allergies: Dermatitis, Rhinitis, and Asthma" is available in all National Book Store and Powerbooks branches. UP Press bookstore, Popular, and other major book stores, at P120 per copy.

Call 721-6691; e-mail milflores@pldtdsl.net, or visit http://milflorespublishing.blogspot.com.

PEN launches Rony Diaz. . .

Previous E1

the University of the Philippines and Ateneo University in the US. While still in college, he won three Palanca prizes, bringing his memoirs in creative writing.

He received a Fulbright-Hitachi Fellowship to study Linguistics and Comparative Literature in Indiana. The Rockefeller Foundation gave him a writing grant when he was in the UK. Upon his return he taught Comparative Literature at UP Diliman, and conducted writing workshops for the English Department.

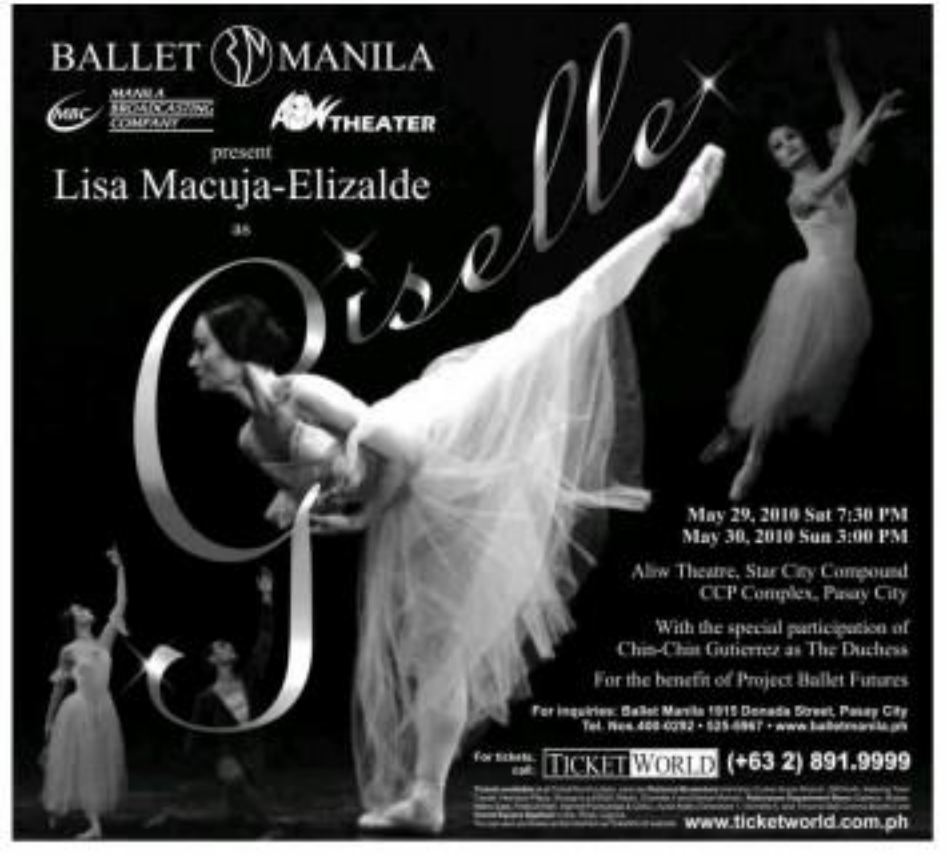
Drubed into public service, he was director general of the National Manpower and Youth Council, and chairman of the Textbook Board of Department of Education. The International Labour Organization (ILO) recruited him to organize the Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme.

He became editor in chief, publisher, and science columnist of the Manila Times until he resigned, in his words, "to devote all (my) time to storytelling." He is working on two novels, "Elegy for Candida" and "Quota y Pista," to have a trilogy with "At Rita's End."

In his review, Ordoner lauded the content of the novel in the agrarian sector in Central Luzon, stating the use of an omniscient narrator providing "joyous details of the history and lay of hacienda Jalaud" where two-bits have to reckon with feudal politics and the activities of Huks and militia-led armed groups.

The novel deals with the life of hacenderos and the elite, as well as of the peasants who are victimized by rapacious landowners.

Ordoner noted that Diaz's bildungsroman novel "shows a path to writers (preoccupied with literary concerns) steered producing work that Salvador Lopez said 'would illuminate any dark nook or cranny of the Filipino temperament, the Filipino experience, the Filipino destiny.'"



Book details US soldier's death by friendly fire

By Rust S. De Vera

The 'Into Thin Air' author solidly chronicles the bright life and tragic death of a most extraordinary soldier at the hands of his comrades

NOW HERE'S ONE FOR WILLING TO GIVE up to serve your country? A lot, perhaps, but not as much as Pat Tillman was willing to give up. The handsome, motivated, thoughtful Tillman was a very popular player, a strong safety, with the National Football League's Arizona Cardinals.

But when the Terrell Wade Century went down on Sept. 11, 2001, Tillman decided that he needed to make a difference. Newly married, he endowed a $3.6-million scholarship to enlist as a US Army Ranger in 2002. Two years later, he was dead, the tragic victim of friendly fire in Afghanistan. And then, things got worse.

How he got there is the tale told in "Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman" (Doubleday/New York, 2009, 383 pages), the newest book from Jon Krakauer. Krakauer shamelessly mines muscular prose, stunning in its surveillance of fascinating, technically arch and the kind of lean we "Into The Wild," the living-Mormon fundamentalists of "Under The Banner of Heaven," and the doomed explorers of "Into Thin Air."

American dark side

Even as he chronicles breathlessly iconic happenings in his books, Krakauer has always probed at the dark side of the extreme American experience, such as murderers in "Wild," hubris in "Air" and fanaticism in "Heaven." In "Glory," Krakauer ponders bravery and falsehood.

As a subject, Krakauer could not have chosen better than Tillman, who, as a meddler athlete who has left it all behind to serve as a soldier, is the closest thing you will find to a modern day American hero. "Glory," thankfully, takes its time to reintroduce readers to the extremely complex world of Pat Tillman. Though he was a ruthlessly dedicated athlete, he was also intelligent, an unusually thoughtful man who preferred the Greek poet Homer to Homer Simpson.

On the football field, he was singular in purpose. (Note: Notre Arizona State University) In his teens Cardinals, Tillman made a name for himself out of sheer tenacity and dedication, becoming a fan favorite. So, after 9/11, he simply couldn't stay out of the fight. "We play football," he said in an interview right after the attacks. "It just seems so unimportant compared to everything that's taken place." There, he got married to his high school sweetheart and joined the Army's elite Rangers, shipping out to Iraq and then to Afghanistan. He was, simply put, "unquestionably the most famous enlisted man in Afghanistan."

Krakauer parallels the events of Tillman's life together with the chronic dust storms of Afghanistan as the bomb-scarred landscape, then pays particular attention to the dirty secret of the American military's operations abroad: death in friendly-fire incidents, when Americans accidentally kill each other. "Military investigations of friendly-fire incidents have produced documented history of obscuring the truth more often than revealing it."

Unchinkable

All this comes together on April 22, 2004, when a group of Rangers led a convoy of Humvees through a treacherous pass on Afghanistan's Khost Province. "Glory" details the unthinkable. how Tillman's men sent, perhaps on edge and confused by the terrain, shot him dead. How his aunt, his family and Arizona reacts to the death is only affecting, but when the military has to cover up the friendly-fire incident by saying Tillman was killed by enemy insurgents, the true tragedy is only beginning. Slowly and inexorably the truth manifest in the Rose.

It's a book shocking, and soul gripping. Jon Krakauer faithfully presents all the available facts about a good man's unnecessary death and the horrific subterfuge that followed. Now we'll have to see if Glory" never forgets the man in the flag-draped coffin. "I'm not sure what this trip holds in store," Pat Tillman writes in his journal as he leaves for Afghanistan. "I feel very good about the men united across from me... in any case, if the opportunity does arise, I feel confident we how we'll react and trust those who are lead ing us... Of course it will all work out."

Available in hardcover from National book store.

Delightful counting book in Filipino

MOST OF US HAVE NOT YET TO ENCOUNTER a child that didn't love bugs or find them fascinating. Now, young bug lovers will find learning numbers possible due with Jomike Tejido's book, "Tagu-taguan: A Counting Book in Filipino" (Tahanan Books for Young Readers).

"Tagu-taguan's" charming Filipino verses make counting from 10 to 1 and back again a delightful discovery journey for the very young. The book opens with 10 grasshoppers hiding among the leaves till the countdown tapers down to one solitary cricket's lullaby. Tejido's visual bug-fest keeps our busy page after page is a parade showcasing spiders, bees, worms and caterpillars, to name a few. The book seamlessly combines math and Filipino language skills perfect for bilingual children ages 1 and up. You will also find an English translation at the back of the book.

Now available in all major bookstores for P165 For more information, please contact Trust or Anja at 8137555 or e-mail ftan@tahananbooks.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

Robin a hit in 'Wowowee'

By Marinell R. Cruz

ACTION STAR ROBIN PADILLA WILL BE making it his entertainment TV host Willie Revillame as the roosting game show "Wowowee" for two weeks, Inquirer Entertainment learned on Saturday.

Padilla started hosting the show on Saturday, almost two weeks after Revillame threatened to resign unless his bosses fire ABSN show biz commentator Johnny Ballesteros.

Ballesteros, who is also a tabloid columnist and segment host of the TV gossip program "The Buzz," reportedly criticized the decision of "Wowowee" directors to invite below-average high school students to play in the show's "Willie of Fortune" segment, purportedly subjecting them to ridicule.

"Willie is in Macau, but was already informed of Robin's entry to the show," an industry insider said. "Willie sent Robin a text message, probably to wish the latter good luck. Robin has agreed to work in the

DID YOU KNOW...

LADY Gaga bows Sinatra

'Idol' saluting Frank Sinatra a ratings dud

NEW YORK—HBO's "American Idol" premiere in 2010, Lady Gaga bows Frank Sinatra.

Of Blue Eyes was another generation, certainly bigger than Gaga in his day. But last Tuesday's "American Idol" devoted to his songs was seen by 17.3 million viewers, the least-watched regularly scheduled episode of the competition since 2002, the Nielsen Co. said.

The next night when Lady Gaga was the featured performer, the audience size increased by 2.1 million people, Nielsen said.

Generally this season, Tuesday "Idol" shows have outdrawn Wednesday ones, so it seems a clear indication that Sinatra's songs, even as arranged by Harry Connick Jr., didn't appeal to the show's younger audiences. Sinatra died in 1998. AP

TV5
ToTooTV
MONDAYS • 10:00PM

MONDAY MAY 17

Sapul	5:00 AM
Pre-School Shows	7:00 AM
Nick on TV5	8:30 AM
Face to Face	11:00 AM
Don't Cry My Love	11:45 AM
First Wives' Club	12:30 PM
Smile Honey	1:15 PM
High Kick!	2:00 PM
Hi-5	2:30 PM
Oggy and the Cockroaches	3:00 PM
Street Fighter	3:30 PM
Battle Spirits	4:00 PM
Nick on TV5	4:30 PM
Hero	6:00 PM
My Wife is a Superwoman	6:30 PM
Easy Fortune Happy Life	7:00 PM
5Max Movies	7:30 PM
Aksyon	9:30 PM
Totoo TV	10:00 PM
Face to Face	10:30 PM
Juicy	11:30 PM
Jojo A All the Way	12:00 MN

POWER PLANT CINEMA
ROBINSONS GALLERIA SOUTH | TIL ARK
A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3-D
12:55, 2:55, 5:55, 7:55, 10:55
HOODWOCKED -3-D
1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
THE LAST SONG -2-D
1:05, 3:05, 5:05, 7:05, 9:05, 11:05
THE BOUNTY HUNTER / HOODWOCKED DOUBLEPACK
12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON -3-D
11:45, 1:45, 3:45, 5:45, 7:45, 9:45
IRON MAN 2 IN 3D -3-D
12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30
PRICES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Five film characters in search of an ending

WE ENJOYED WATCHING Chris Martinez's "100" a couple of film seasons ago, so we took a look at his new film, "Five Comes to Write," when it started its theater run last May 12. How did it shape up in a box-office ring test?

The way we see it, the movie's best asset is Martinez's tight control. Style and family approach to filmmaking, especially his sense of dialogue and characterization. Thus, for its production as in the colorful look, we think we see brought together by an impending beach wedding that quickly takes a huge turn when all five principals figure in a murky-related car crash during a redo eclipse.

Exchanging souls

As the filmmaker's entry completion has it, however, his five protagonists don't die, they simply "exchange souls." Thus, the blushing bride wakes up to find that her "sweet" body is now inhabited by a "foaming fairy" of a makeup artist (Jodee Lopez).

The other characters similarly get "accidentally interchanged," with expectedly dizzy results. Jaime Fabregas, Eugene Domingo and Tuesday Vargas play their characters (who by personality fits all of the Family) fun and games they're worth.

Angelica Panganiban, in particular, gets into the leisure and-even ridiculous spirit of the Martinez-ish (and her) manifestations from cloyingly sweet virgin to foul-mouthed foaming fairy to a right to be bride.

ANGELICA Panganiban, Eugene Domingo and Tuesday Vargas

VIEWFINDER
ALICE U. ALEJO

Moreover, the fast proceedings are bedeviled by a number of limiting factors. First, the movie takes too long in setting up its central plot premise, by the time the fifty-member takers places too much screen time has been eaten up.

This makes it difficult for subsequent scenes to build and push, particularly when, after our characters have started his or her comedic stuff, you realize with a sinking feeling that three or four more of them are waiting to take you on their versions of pretty much the same scene.

Still, we appreciate such characters and "chapters" take on the story's central comic plot premise. What exactly runs our protagonists, how do they get to their goals, and what is the movie's main points appear to have been said and done—it's been a hard time "finding" in reading!

It's clear that the production team—actors, comedy—is not all to most of the strings it's loosened. Stuck together again in time for its final fade, but it has a surprisingly tough time doing it, and takes too long to relieve the emotional trip.

The stylized finale makes the storytelling decidedly dodgy and dizzy. Despite these glitches, however, we still couldn't resist that "Five Comes to Write" makes for more eventful viewing here than some more "mainstream" movies, and we appreciate that key difference.

The indie spirit clearly flows in this production. Now, the challenge is for it to be supported by more savvy audiences, especially in the area of a more organic and "inevitable" flow from start to finish.

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Liam is thinking man's action hero

TAKE FIVE

ACCLAIMED ACTOR LIAM NEESON is on a roll and he's got the best plans ever.

Having just descended from the lofty Mt. Olympus in "Clash of the Titans," Neeson takes off higher in the upcoming "Unknown" movie (version Get Smoothed Inside).

Along with co-stars Bridgitte in "Fast" Peck (Bradley Cooper), (remember B.A. Baracus (Quinton "Rampage" Jackson) and also Jihad Murdock (Diddy-Dopin's, Inc.'s Brancaccio highly skilled soldiers) but turned telegrapher for a crime disguised as one of them while completing a top secret mission.

The movie's string of mind-blowing adventures finds them in Iraq where they eventually get to rubber-stamp their visas while being chased by the government's Lt. Gen. (Jessica Biel's Ice Queen mistress) in their hands.

While Neeson may be experiencing new highs in his career, it is Hitchcock's achievement, suffering the loss of his wife of 13 years, actress Natasha Richardson, just in "Taken" into turning in his office early.

Already a heavily private man, Neeson kept his focus on finishing out on the following interview:

Your co-stars can't speak highly enough about "The Artist" performance which finds most of you

LIAM NEESON and Diane Kruger in "Unknown"

during trips in many ways. What was the attraction?

I had got a lovely taste of action adventure with "Taken." And I liked it. I like the chemistry of it very much. I've always kept myself ready fit and I was not looking for another opportunity to kick some ass. He agrees was talking about "The Artist," "Taken." The com- ple

of times I slid back on it, it was be a younger audience. They sent me the script and I sent Ridley Scott was behind it, which was great, and an before I knew it, I was on board.

Do you like this new incarnation of yourself as a post-modern action male lead?

I do actually. I was a heavy for seven years as a kid, so I did know how to throw a punch. It's just nice to get a chance to do it on screen.

Is there an female accent they should look out for?

I think there'll be two in three of those actually. Olga Kurylenko and I think two of us are going to be in critically acclaimed at best wooden fellow in this film.

Given the longevity of your career, what would have to compel you to act in films, as opposed to other mediums?

I love making them. I love being with crews. In fact, in Dublin now the past 10 years, it's not individual actors I've worked with, it's crews I've been with.

I can remember sound recordist Oisin, cutter Ross and the director of cinematography Jay Oisin, Ross and, you know, the food girlie. I can remember people like that.

I love spending six days with these people. The creation of the film will grow into a real mob, and eventually that little period of time between action and cut is still very precious.

"Unknown," distributed by Warner Bros. for 20th Century Fox, opens June 16 in local theaters.

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Willie no longer happy . . .

LUCY Torres-Gomez

Gomez could be a front-runner behind."

Lucy Torres-Gomez, who won a congressional seat in the 4th district of Leyte, has one request before she assumes office. And that is to be given enough time to still do her dancing. She still definitely have all the right moves for Congress just as she does on the dance floor.

. . . .

Cristine Reyes and Rayver Cruz were spotted in a crowded beauty clinic at Robinsons Ermita's hot in Pandacan. I texted Cristine about it but she shrugged it off with a shrug and close his answer. "Friends long family."

Is there any chance that their friendship will blossom into love? Cristine says it's a remote possibility. So, now that cat is everywhere a day after the election liquor ban just a couple of the alcohol talking!

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Robin a hit in 'Wowowee'

show for two weeks." Willie is expected to return to Manners on Tuesday.

Willie's performance on "Wowowee" has drawn received rave reviews from viewers on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Some also pore suggestions on how he can improve the show. He even landed on the Top 5 list of Saturday afternoon's trending topics on Twitter.

Meanwhile, there is still no official word from ABS-CBN, which produces and airs "Wowowee," on the issue. The source said Revilla-team's contract with the network will end in 2011. "Everything is still all out. There's nothing to let the network. Pero don't just let go of a singing Pilipino so losing records," he said. "Ang gusto ko nga ay magkaibigan ang dalawa." Reyes is trying to Revilla-ne and Jinkoldin, who have yet to talk since their on-air tirades against each other.

Pauli Sa says "very positive" to staff members of "Wowowee" on Saturday, according to a source. He also admitted to "looking a lot nervous" to be working in a game show host for the first time. He also told them how thankful he was for his group, the chance to host, added the source.

E-mail: marinelle.ss@gmail.com

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Another win for 'Bakal Boys'

CHEER FACTOR

FILIPINO filmmaker Raheen Jerrel's "Bunsoy: Bakal Boys" won Best Picture in the 3-Cilentan section of the Barcelona Asian Film Festival in the Spanish city last week. The film, starring Dina Bonnevie and Ivan Andrei Arenas, won "unanimously" awarded the digital category's top prize "by the jury composed of programmers from Cinemanila and Asiatopia and award actor Alejandro Abad. —Reported from Diego Jo

Willie no longer happy in 'Wowowee'

MANILA BUREAU CHIEF

My ad agency contacts were appalled by her behavior during a shoot for a major product endorsement.

She made the organizers wait for the hours and when she was interviewed about the product, she gave them crappy answers," my source reveals.

"The height of it all was she kept waiting during the presscon. All the press people were already there, but she was still having her make-up done. Ang tagal-tagal! It only her attitude is so

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

beautiful as her face.

* * *

What a welcome surprise to see Robin Padilla women's boxing as Willie Revillame's bitch sister in "Wowowee."

My friends keep teasing me, "Girl Rizz ot makes such a charming host."

I must agree, I've never seen the host look better. And I can't be happier for him because during my times together, he was down and out, back then, his world was crumbling. Now he's on top of the world.

Kudos to you, "Lastowell!" Thanks for the bittersweet memories. My hours remembers every single.

Oops! Enough of my sweet words. Back to regular programming.

* * *

At press time, Willie Revillame is still in limbo. Is he or isn't he going to move host. ABS-CBN to TV5? He threatened to resign if the Kapamilya network doesn't fire Jobert Sucaldito, who keeps lambasting him in his show on the network's AM radio station, DZMM.

In his exclusive interview with TV5's Cristy Fermin in our show "Tsismosilt" (TVE, Sunday at 2:30 p.m.), whom we share hosting chores with Ruffa Gutierrez, he said he is no longer happy where he is and at this point in his career, work-wise, no longer his only priority. He supported Jobert also claiming that the talent has to be getting in "Wowowee" may not even be enough for his hospital bills if his health problems worsen due to his being overworked.

If there's a Willie's, there's a ... back to MMK or leading in TV5 ...

MARIAN RIVERA

* * *

If plans don't mature, Richard Gomez will soon be a bigtime MP.

Goma is being eyed to be the guest Domingo's leading man in her new sitcom. With wife Lucy as the network's "Status Goddess,"

'Robin Hood' visually rich but too serious

DARTH VADER, BATMAN. Captain James T. Kirk. New member Superhero figure gets the origin story treatment in Ridley Scott's "Robin Hood."

The world probably did not need another version of this famous tale, even though it comes with outstanding production values and an impressive pedigree. Besides Scott, the script comes from Oscar winning "L.A. Confidential" writer Brian Helgeland, and the heavyweight cast is anchored by Russell Crowe as the title character and Cate Blanchett as Marian. Solid supporting work comes from Mark Strong, William Hurt, Eileen Atkins, Mathew Macfadyen and the once-Brat Max von Sydow.)

RUSSELL Crowe as Robin Hood

Jazzed up

This Robin Hood is not a man to fight and not even robbing them. He's old and getting a bit post jazz out, but he's neither an expert archer in the crusading army of King Richard the Lion-hearted (Danny Huston) at the turn of the 12th century. Working with "Gladiator" director Scott for the fifth time, Crowe is bulking and looking every bit the actor on the set of "Robin Hood" itself. With its sweeping scope and tangible grittiness, it does look great. An old-fashioned epic jazzed up with new technology. Several moments stand out for their imagery, including one aerial shots and the sight of hundreds of arrows ripping through the air and landing in a thunderous shower.

But Does the history feel the arrows, which are fine incarnations aspect from its filling and remembering producer story, are shot and edited in such a chaotic, choppy way it is nearly impossible to tell what is happening. They are all frenzied, kinetic energy. The climactic showdown is much half of debris, including Robin pulling "Excuse" in slow motion; meanwhile, other members of his posse magically hit their targets at just the right opportune moment.

REVIEW

Long before that...we do

meet King Arthur Clair—the convoluted plot from Crowe's Robin Longstride serving in the king's army against the French. Once the King dies, Robin returns to England and assumes the identity of one Richard's noblemen (also dead) in order to bring back the crown, which then goes to the King's cocky but happy brother, John (Oscar Isaac). The new king's right hand man, Godfrey (Strong, always a convincing villain), encourages him but is also in cahoots with the French. "Robin Hood" is not a documentary.

But Robin also rises the dead exacts home in Nottingham to return his corset to his blind and aging father, Sir Walter Loxley, played by von Sydow with exquisite humor and dignity. There he meets Lady Marian, who was married to Loxley's son but all of a sup of and five before he went off to battle. This is no delicate damsel; but rather a thick-skinned pragmatist who knows her way around a sword, to borrow Fyn Bale/Lancaster sword, Blanchett is born.

Compelling scenes

Robin also assumes the identity of Marian's husband to keep up appearances and allow the family to retain its 5,000 acres, and so it is no surprise when they end up fulling for each other for real. Crowe and Blanchett's scenes are compelling primarily because they allow us to watch two human-like movie stars, ones who can really act, shaving the screen as well as some snappy banter. While the movie feels like it need to spell out their emotional connection, however, it rents mundane.

Eventually, Robin assembles a band of men, some of whom are kind of merry, to take on the French invasion. Godfrey has helped orchestrate. As they storm the beaches of England, it is all very "Saving Private Ryan." Not bringing to mind the superior opus that "Robin Hood" resembles does not exactly help its cause.

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

NOW SHOWING

'Survivor' crowns 20th winner tonight

TV'S SAVAGEST SURVIVOR SERIES crowns its twentieth winner on "Survivor: Heroes vs. Villains" wraps up tonight at 6 p.m. on free-to-broadcast on Jack TV.

After being stranded for 39 days somewhere in the South Pacific, one winner at the sole survivor and $1 million riches.

Colby Donaldson, Jessica Shields and Russell Hantz the jury in the final tribal council where they confessed those they had previously voted out.

The show runners on May 15 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Cannes glitz, glamour

This month, CNN's "The Screening Room" guides viewers to the Cannes Film Festival, as host Mylene Klass goes beyond the glamour and the glitz to the movie awards festival.

The show's team rubs shoulders with the creators of the most billion dollar blockbusters, influencer auteurs and true bad-ass Muggers.

Directors such as Ridley Scott and Woody Allen will strut up the red-carpeted steps of the Palais; Oliver Stone talks global financial meltdown on his latest, Jon Voight talks classic "Midnight Cowboy" premieres at the festival, and Mick Jagger brings Rock 'n' Roll swagger to the Croisette. From Algeria to Russia, China to Iran, 16 films will battle for the top palm.

CLICK!

"The Screening Room" airs on May 20 at 4:30 p.m., May 27 at 12:30 a.m., May 29 at 6:30 p.m., May 30 at 1 a.m., 4:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and May 31 at 5:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Viewers may log on to http://www.cnn.com/thescreeningroom.

THE 20 returning castaways to compete in "Survivor: Heroes vs. Villains"

CHRIS Hardwick, left, hosts "Web Soup"; Bill Paxton, right, with co-stars Jennifer Coolidge and Joanna Trippleton in "Big Love"

'Big Love' season 4

Golden Globe winning series "Big Love" kicks off its nine-episode fourth season on May 31 at 11 p.m. on HBO and HBO HD.

The series airs consecutively for four days from June 14 starting 10 p.m. on HBO Signature, culminating with a three-episode finale on June 17 at 10 p.m.

"Big Love" tells the story of Salt Lake City businessman Bill Henrickson (Bill Paxton), who balances the needs of his three wives—Barb, Sarah and Margene—their nine children, three houses and his own entrepreneurial ambitions.

Jeanne Tripplehorn, Chloe Sevigny and Ginnifer Goodwin star in the series.

Fantasy, online videos

"Bob Rubber's Fantasy Factory" where outlandish and amazing dreams come true, premieres on Jack TV on May 20 at 8 p.m.

Bob Dybbuk, a dumbfounded, unsuspecting, philandering husband and a celebrity cake baker had the odds and stacked his fantasies-come-reality.

The Fantasy Factory is his affair, a massive 25,000-square-foot technovisual—and fully shameless—warehouse most dreams come true in Los Angeles.

Also premiering on May 20 is Jack TV's newest half-hour show "Web Soup" at 8:30 p.m., a humor-filled look at the ever-changing world of online videos.

Hosted by stand-up comedian Chris Hardwick, it features amazing videos like exercising dogs, a table-top dancer who mimicks her fooling and memorable men who fail to land on their feet.

ENTERTAINMENT

'Paglilitis' a test of faith

By Maximo R. Cruz

SHOOTING FOR MARIO O'Hara's "Ang Paglilitis ni Andres Bonifacio" will wrap up before the month ends, contrary to earlier reports that the award-winning director has backed out from the project due to lack of funding.

The update came from the film's producer Joey O'Hara, who is also the director's brother.

"Ang Paglilitis ni Andres Bonifacio" is one of five entries in the Director's Showcase category in the annual Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival, to be held in July. Mario O'Hara will be competing with Mark Meily ("Tuang Pinaang Buhay"), Joselito Altarejos ("Pink Hotel Hotel"), Joel Lamangan ("Sigwa") and Gil Portes ("Two Percent").

Abunds to the rescue

Reports published in March said that O'Hara decided to withdraw from the Cinemalaya competition due to a disagreement with his previous supporter on the stipulations in their contract. Further this month, viewer manager and TV host Boy Abunda announced that he has agreed to cooperate the film.

Abunda was also one of the producers of the 2009 Cinemalaya entry "Batay," which won for Gil Buenaflor the Best Director award.

"It was good that we met people who willingly helped us with the funding. We are positive that we will beat the deadline set by the festival organizers on May 31," Joey O'Hara told Inquirer Entertainment on Saturday.

"Paglilitis" is about the trial of Bonifacio under the Philippine revolutionary government established by Emilio Aguinaldo.

MARIO O'Hara

No joke to play twin roles

By Maximo R. Cruz

ANGEL ESPIRITU, WHO plays the twin characters Agos and Hualica in the Kapuso telenovela-drama series, said she finds her roles as challenging that she sometimes asks herself why she accepted them.

"It's my first acting job, pareho rin agad kabisig ang nakuha ko sa akin. Nahirapan ako ha!" But then it "also makes me think that, maybe, the roles were given to me because my bosses believe in me," the GMA Network talent at the recent launch of The Ramp Cravings, which she endorses.

"I also know that my parents will be with me every step of the way," said the daughter of award-winning actors Mark Gil and Jaclyn Jose.

Angel plays the twin sisters—Hualica, who's a normal, avid Agos, who has a physical defect.

"The sisters become bitter rivals until a twist of fate reverses their situations.

"At first, I thought playing Hualica would be more challenging," said Angel. "I didn't see myself as a kontrabida. But when we started taping, the production team said I was good as Hualica. Mas madali kasi magtaray-taray."

Angel recently signed up with a new parent deal with Regal Films. She will start working on her first film, "Hiraya," where she plays Eugene Domingo's rebellious daughter.

She will also join the cast of the remake of "Temptation Island," and the horror trilogy "Shake, Rattle and Roll 12."

Born Andrea Nguyen, Angel, 17, is Manila's fourth child to join showbiz. Her half-siblings Gabby, Maureen and Timothy (who goes by the screen name Sid Lucero) have appeared in TV shows or movies in the past years.

She hopes to work with her Kapuso labmates someday. "That would be an even greater challenge for me. Kapuso Sid is a really good actor, [so] pwede ba ako?" she stressed.

"Will want to show how life in the remote islands remains bearable," says filmmaker Arnel Mardoquio.

Sailing on a sea of challenges

Mindanao filmmaker finds an audience among critics and students in Manila

By Rayan San Diego Jr.

DIRECTOR ARNEL MARDOquio compared the making of his film "Hospital Boat" to "sailing through a sea of challenges."

His goal sounded daunting: to tell the complex stories of ordinary people—a Tausug doctor, a seaman, a formal refugee and a Manobo rape victim—living in the shadows of warlords in Mindanao.

"We want to show how life in the remote islands remains bearable, while people struggle through armed conflict and abject poverty," he added.

Logging a Cinema 2011 committee, Mardoquio with his crew

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TROUBLED waters: Rochelle Pangilinan (facing camera) and Jason Abalos in a not-so-hot battle scene from "Tayong Dalawa"

Sailing on a sea...

From page A1

and cure of measly diseases never stayed on normal islands—it threatens boat ride from Davao City... for three months in April last year.

Ismael volunteered for Jolo. "Ismael is closest to the Sulu Island and messengers," he explained.

Meager resources

Apart from meager resources, they also had to grapple with unpredictable weather.

Fortunately, they had cordial relations with the leaders and residents of the community.

"Our first public screening was held in a gymnasium of the island's town," he testified.

Barely an outside after the film's premiere, the Maguindanao massacre happened on Nov. 23, 2009.

"Call it coincidence... find the film is about why warlords remain entrenched not only in Mindanao but in the entire country. This datter because the national government end. But there," he said.

Personal

He noted that his film's story is very personal. "My father, a medical representative, almost died in an ambush in Pagsanjaan, Catabato, in 1975," he recounted.

He also remembered growing up in Pagsanjaan, in a neighborhood ruled by a merchant during the early years of the Marcos regime.

He plans to tour "Hospital Boat" to different campuses. "My first film, 'Hanggang sa Tuna (Earth's Whisper)' has reached 20,000 paying viewers not only in Mindanao, but also in Hanoi and Manila," he said.

After screenings in Cinema Rehiyon at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the theater de Dasas and Philippine Women's University, "Hospital Boat" will start its campus run for school year 2010-2011.

Like his debut "Hanghang," "Hospital Boat" was shot by the cutter Uman Amanda where it was incarcerated in seven campuses, including Ilon Film and Director.

He is almost finished with his third film, "Medio," which he described as "alternating the armed conflict in the eyes of a young woman."

'Paglilitis' ...

From page A1

Alfred Vargas plays the role of Bonifacio, who founded the revolutionary group Katipunan and led the Philippine uprising against Spain. 2000 Binibining Pilipinas World Cassandra Ponti plays Gregoria de Jesus or Oriang, Bonifacio's wife. Lance Raymundo is the brilliant military strategist Emilio Aguinaldo. Ai. Other characters are played by actors from the Tanghalang Pilipino, the resident theater group of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and Joey O'Hara.

He said filming started on May 11 and would resume on the 20th. "We shot some of the scenes like the movie stars, in San Antonio, Binalonan City. This was right after the scene folks endorsed their boats," he reported. "The wedding scene of Andres and Oriang will be shot at a church in Malolos, Laguna. The trial, which is the most important scene, will be shot in Bulacan City. Hopefully, no request for the use of other venues like old churches in Intramuros, in Tondo, Cavite, as well as in Puerto Azul, will be approved."

He said the most difficult part in making a period movie is the procurement of costumes and props. "But we got by," he added. "We just had to tinker the effects but 'tara' to attend to every detail—from the wigs of the actors down to their slippers. We are embarrassing with a lot of guaranteed nominations, some of which are very outspoken."

He added: "The family of Gregoria de Jesus was of great help. They allowed us to use the gowns that Oriang had written, as well as some of the things that her second husband, Julio Nakpil, had worn-posed."

Jerry O'Hara confessed that Dirk Matic is feeling the stress. "We're working on a very, very tight budget. We can't afford mistakes, thing kind neighborhood Army," he said.

SHANG CINEPLEX

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2) THE LAST SONG SPG 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:00

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6 YOU TO ME ARE EVERYTHING
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3 IRON MAN 2
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2 IRON MAN 2
3 ROBIN HOOD
4 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
5 A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

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2 A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET
3 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
4 YOU TO ME ARE EVERYTHING
5 IRON MAN 2
6 ROBIN HOOD

IMUS

1 YOU TO ME ARE EVERYTHING
2 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
3 IRON MAN 2
4 ROBIN HOOD
5 THE LAST SONG
6 A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

ANGELES

1 ROBIN HOOD
2 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
3 A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET
4 IRON MAN 2

TACLOBAN

1 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID
2 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
3 IRON MAN 2

SUBIC/CLARK

1 IRON MAN 2
2 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
3 DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

BACOLOD

1 IRON MAN 2
2 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
3 THE LOSERS
4 IRON MAN 2
5 IRON MAN 2
6 THE BACK-UP PLAN

ILOILO

1 IRON MAN 2
2 IRON MAN 2
3 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
4 A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET
5 THE BACK-UP PLAN
6 SHUTTER ISLAND

DAVAO

1 IRON MAN 2
2 SHUTTER ISLAND
3 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
4 THE LOSERS

BAGUIO CITY

1 THE BACK-UP PLAN
2 HERE COMES THE BRIDE
3 IRON MAN 2

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Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Movie Guide

'Dolores' versus the giants

LARA Quinzon stars as Dolores and Rafa Calleja as Hito

By Rayzel San Diego Jr.

IS HE BRAVE OR JUST plain scared?

Independent filmmaker Lito Casaje opens his film "Dolores" in Indonesia (subtitles on. May 19)—the main word in "Sticks Stones Ahu" and while other Hollywood hits like "Iron Man 2" and "Robin Hood" are still showing at the cineplex.

"I feel giddy, queasy and nervous," Casaje admits. "But I'm undaunted because my film and those foreign movies belong to two different worlds and genres. It's a testament for me. One is Hollywood; the other, extremely personal."

Casaje feels it's important to screen "Dolores" in a multi-based theater after premiering it in last year's Digital Lokal competition at the Cinemalaya film festival.

Presenting small film to an audience is "definitely fulfilling...your film ceases to be a mere history exercise. A film work of art can only breathe and bleed if it's experienced by an audience. It comes alive right before your eyes."

Casaje produced the digital movie through Imcompanya, its dynamic Peterson which also stars movie-stage player. "You need to bring a one-man-their kind of person," he says. "I do practically everything, even in my theatre practice. The challenge is to make sure you lose less distracted."

Promotional strategy

The director-producer is in charge of marketing and promotions, too. "I invited, friends, co-worked friends and fans to the hope that they will be intrigued by my movies, and hopefully...be enthralled by the film," he explains his giving no pronounced strategy.

Tapping a cast of mostly unknown actors, Indy-name comer Lara Buenaventura, can prove to be a major hit. She, he contends. "Common and produces may find it unacceptable and unlawful...but office-wise. But then again someone has to break those for inside and outfits."

Having newspaper actors can work for certain films, he notes.

"Viewers will find the sex debut more real since the actory don't look familiar," he says. "They would get jaded or disinterested be the actors' celebrity status. As such, the film will resonate with a documentary-like feel."

He is happy with his cast of new discoveries. "They did all right. They neither acted nor overacted. Though here I might some of them didn't set at all," he says.

Fresh off "Dolores," Casaje is now in the middle of shaping his next film. "It's a fiction-documentary... I'm leaning on this one, plus a few other projects that are still on the scripting stage."

Email the author: bayzelsandiego@hotmail.com

Jake Cuenca, Sam Pinto together again

By Marinel R. Cruz

WHY DID JAKE CUENCA LOSE the chance to become Sam Pinto's boyfriend in the recent past? Because he knew he couldn't handle it.

"I had a lot on my plate at that time. I was involved in a big issue with my girlfriend's [Rosanne Gonzalez]. I was being unnecessarily linked to Ina Alvarez. I was also just starting to work on a major project, 'Bayang Dalawa.' I had to attend to my personal affairs first," said the 22-year-old actor, who added that he'd known Pinto, a 2009 "Pinoy Big Brother: Double Up" housemate, for the past six years.

The two have appeared in past TV commercials.

"I was touched when she publicly admitted that we were dating. It meant that she took our relationship seriously," Cuenca told Inquirer Entertainment. "I never denied that we had something going on, I just chose to keep quiet about it."

However, he clarified that they parted as friends. "Now that she's also an actress, she is starting to understand why I did what I did. She's cool about it. Sam told me that she had no idea being an artista was this hard," Cuenca said.

Jake Cuenca and Sam Pinto

> 'I never denied we had something going on'

Leading lady

For now she gets to play his leading lady in "Wise Pandit," part four of the series "Aginaw: Mga Alamat ng Bantog Bentilo" on the Kapamilya network.

Apparently Cuenca is glad to be working with Pinto. "She is also able to spend more time together because of the long taping hours for this show," he said.

At a press launch last week, ABS-CBN announced who will portray Bentilo (10) other pop-up characters...with Ai Fukuoka as "Bayang Bayanihan," Jeon Ramos as "Bantong Bulag," Jackie Chong Dee as "Sino Pabili" and Bentilo's grandson John Bentilo as "Kapitan Jinggo."

The first three in the series were "Bayang Alipin," which featured Gerald Anderson; "Bantong Bayaning," with Gian Martin; and "Bayang Aginaw" with John Bentilo.

Extraordinary powers

Directed by Dan dco Imperial, "Wise Pandit" is about Elias and the extraordinary powers he get from a bat. He uses these powers to fight evil.

Cuenca has finished working on the show's first three weeks. He's very pleased with the footage he has viewed. "There are quite a number of action scenes here. Different fighting scenes feature different disciplines. How it's mainly Muay Thai. I had to train for over a month before taping," he said.

"I'm feeling the pressure since the other shows have all been successful, he added. "That's why I'm giving my very best in this project. The fight scenes are all very truthful. I've got bruises and scratches to show."

"Elias Bentilo" premieres May 29 on ABS-CBN and also features Cherry Pie Picache, Bella Shmt, Sam Lim, Jeph Lorenzo and Hermina Bautista.

E-mail: cruz@gmail.com

2010 WWII True Stories Contest
First prize winner / H4

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EUREKA! *Queenie N. Lee-Chua*

Noy Aquino's blueprint for education

This is the first of a two-part column on the multi-agency educational plans of possibly the next RP president

NOW THAT NOYNOY Aquino has won, let us hope that Philippine educators will improve. Noy's advisers on education have created a multiple agenda that makes sense but will take courage and political will to implement.

Their plans are outlined in the Liberal Party website www.liberalparty.org.ph/EDUCATION#ixzz1sc_Education. This is a summary of their, and hopefully our, national education agenda.

Longer basic education

For the past year, Enrico Javier University president Cristina Bautista, Ateneo University of the Philippines vice president for academic affairs Maria Serena Diokno and I have been part of a Commission on Higher Education-Technical Panel on General Education.

Under the able leadership of Enrico Education Undersecretary Raquel Cruz, the panel discussed, with various stakeholders a plan for adding one or two more years of basic education before students can qualify to enter university.

While we have 10 years of basic education, most medical require at least 12 years of elementary and secondary schooling, giving students more time to obtain the knowledge and master the skills needed for higher learning.

Of course, adding more years of schooling is bound to cause an uproar in many circles, primarily because of the burden of paying for those added years. But we have an choice. In today's globalized world, countries are making all-out to align education requirements with one another. And like you, for instance, many Europeans consider eighth-grade Bologna accord, which has major implications for our own system.

I am happy that New shares my sentiments. He says, "We need to add two years to our basic education. Those who can afford to pay five up to 14 years of schooling before university. That, their children are getting into the best universities and the best jobs after graduation. I want at least 12 years for our public schoolchildren to give them an even chance at succeeding."

Tech-voc education

A Singapore deputy minister of education once told me that one reason their country ran well was that students went to fields they showed promise in. As early as high school, their rigorous examination system had identified which students were suited for university, and which were better off in technical schools.

In Singapore, he bantered to add, those who went to technical schools were not looked down upon, since every country needed electricians, computer technicians, video repairpersons, plumbers and so forth. Depending on their skills, they could earn as good in income as white-collar workers. Investors in Singapore are also not worry as there in the West.

This sensible method might not work well in our country where families dream of having their children graduate from college, even if those are mere diploma mills, and view if their kids hardly learn anything. White-collar jobs are still the dream of everyone, even if technical jobs are more in needed. Our society needs to start valuing and recognizing the technical and vocational professions.

Nes says, "Half our high school graduates want to work upon graduation but do not have enough technical education. We need to provide an education alternative to further prepare students for the world of work. Technical, vocational education must be reintroduced in our public high schools with trade tests and skills rating. Ghosts or other acceptable work standards in the field schooling to instill industry needs and employment."

As a member of the governing board of

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One Million Trees and Beyond project surpasses half million mark

THE GREEN FOR LIFE ONE MILLION Trees and Beyond (1MTB), a project initiated by Br. Armin Luistro FSC and the La Salian Institute for the Environment (LIFE), has 614,694 seedlings planted as of mid of February 2010. The project aims to plant one million trees around the Philippines by June 2011, in time for the centennial celebrations of the Lasallian presence in the Philippines.

Led by Br. Armin Luistro FSC, 1MTB was officially launched last Sept. 26, at the Mt. Pinoy-palo Protected Landscape in Tanauan, Batangas, planting about 1,000 seedlings and participated by about 400 volunteers from the different La Salle schools (12) across Luzon, through its two mentioned planting modes: the active participation of the youth in actual tree planting.

In line with this, LIFE and the La Salle schools organized forums and researches as support activities for the project. Last year, LIFE hosted talks on mangroves by TIME Environmentalist of the Year, Dr. Juergen Thiesmeier.

Research papers on 1MTB were also submitted to the 2010 International Research Conference on Environmental Research and Technology in Penang, Malaysia and 2010 International Conference in Valencia, Spain.

For further inquiries regarding 1MTB, please visit www.1millionnewtonsbeyond.com.

9th Unesco-Apnieve Assembly set

THE UNESCO-ASIA PACIFIC NETWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION and Values Education will hold its 9th Assembly on May 21-22, at the University of Makati. With the theme "Education for Sustainable Development for All, by All", two hundred educators will deepen their awareness of the four pillars of ESD, participate in demo-teaching using the LIVE (Learning 4 Life Holistic Teaching-Learning) cycle & spread the culture of Peace in the Conference in the launching of Unesco Sourcebook III: "Learning to Know for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future" written by Apnieve Philippine president and former Deputy Secretary Dr. Lourdes R. Quisumbing. Professors who demonstrate the new modules are Fred. Ramil Sanchez, Dr. Marilen Bautista, Dr. Cynthia de Leon, and Dr. Ronnie Mallillin. A panel discussion on educating for ESD will feature Dr. L. Castro, Dr. Roberto Javier, Dr. Nina Calanog and Dr. Manuel Padua. A Dapdi Memo Re: 1400 urges school officials to attend this conference in order to integrate ESD concepts and values across the curriculum & basic education. Interested educators can call Miriam College 436-0431 or Prof. R. Ramirez, PNU 527-0368 for details.

FEU High School Class 1981 sets reunion

ALUMNI OF THE FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY (FEU) GIRL (LAB) AND BOYS High School (HS) Class 1981 are regular outs June 26, for their 29th grand reunion in the Philippines. This batch is the last one segregated HS batch of FEU, and its alumni continue to make outstanding contributions in the Philippines and abroad in government service, the medical field, law enforcement, entertainment, athletics, private business, the academe, community service, and various other fields. For reunion details, batch alumni can e-mail the organizers at pinkypoy_ppc@yahoo.com or text 0905-7157147 (Vic Cecilio).

CEU-Elans holds grand reunion

CENTRO ESCOLAR UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, LIBERAL Arts, Music, and Social Work (Salians) is calling all its alumni. The school is sponsoring the grand Salians reunion titled "Oktabalitaw" at the Student Activity Center on May 29, from 10 a.m. The evening activity promises to be filled with old-new Linamnamans, Antayuhan, and Kalutuhan. To highlight the activity, selected alumni will share stories of their school days in CEU and their career adventures after they graduated. Br. Timothy S. Cruz, Salians dean, and Dr. Lolita Pablo, Elans Alumni Department president, will welcome the alumni. Other officers of the Salians Alumni Association, under Jay Cortado, Oktabalitaw chair, will host the program. For details and to simply confirm your attendance, call or text 09189107131 or e-mail Isabelle Catherine Dy@yahoo.com, or log on to www.ceu.edu.ph.

Olfu-CHIM adjusts curriculum for students

INGRAM, A BOARD OF CULINARY EDUCATION AND HOTEL WORKERS' Inn and abroad has encouraged Our Lady of Fatima University College of Hospitality and Institutional Management (CHIM) to adjust its curriculum to fit the needs of the students. Now, CHIM students can earn a BS Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM), Culinary and Food Service Management (CFSM), and Hospitality Services in Cruise Line Operations (Voyager). With the new curriculum, students can pursue their desired career. With the two years of study, they have their preparation; a Bachelor of Science Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM) or Culinary Arts (Diploma). For those who want to equip themselves more, another year of study would earn them another Bachelor's Science Degree and they could target to a specific service industry. A student can earn 2 BS degrees in just 4 years. Quality and first-class training given to students help them meet the qualifications here and in abroad. This needs students to hotels and cruise ships abroad for their International Practicum Program. They get hands-on training from 5-star hotels and resorts in Boracay and Subic. For the Local Practicum Program, Olfu has tie-ups with Metro Group of Restaurants Complex Inc - Italianni's, Piggadilly, Kangaroo Jack, Richard Co., and Bellini. Olfu applied for Autonomous Status from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and has been producing topnotchers in the area of Medicine, Nursing, Physical Therapy, and Medical Technology.

MIRIAM COLLEGE FACULTY NAMED OUTSTANDING BUSINESS EDUCATOR IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Dr. Antonio M. Lopez (center), director of Miriam College's Planning and Development Office, encourages and thanks, in behalf of the school, Dr. Rosalina Palanca-Carpio for being named Outstanding Business Educator in Entrepreneurship organized by the Philippine Council of Deans and Educators in Business (PCDEB). The awarding ceremony was held during the 9th National PCDEB Conference at Lucsuni Academy. Also in photo are Dean Bernard Salcedo, PCDEB president-elect and Dr. Rene S. Tenorio, CHED Commissioner.

BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS GRADUATION RITES

Business tycoon and philanthropist Don Jaime Zobel de Ayala (r., Credit) confers a medal to the graduation of 14 inmates at the Academy of Perpetual Help Students Data (APHSD) in Sta. Rosa, Laguna (Oct 6) night after their commencement exercises together with president Anthony Romero (left) and Michael Tuvera (right) during the APHSD 23rd Commencement Exercises held recently at Santiago Hall, Administration Building, New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa City. Ayala is the guest of honor and speaker of the 23rd commencement rites of 19 inmates who finished BS in Commerce major in Entrepreneurship.

Free lecture on Best Practices in Law Studies at UE

THE UE COLLEGE OF LAW (UE CLAW) WILL HOLD A WELCOME LECTURE for its freshmen and upperclassmen entitled "How to Ace Top Class Like Me!" on June 12. Slated for 8 p.m. at the UE Pre-Bar Review Room, the free lecture series aimed at guiding students to succeed and excel in law studies and in law practice and top the bar exams, is taken with the UE Claw Best Practices in Law Studies Program. The UE Claw faculty members, academic achievers and bar exam reviewers par excellence will share with the "Future" to talk about best practices in (1) proven approaches in the study of laws, (2) classroom sessions, (3) time management, (4) digesting of legal cases, (5) communication skills, (6) comprehensive and working skills, (7) outlining and application skills, (8) among other related topics. Direct Visitor is extending the invitation to all UE Claw freshmen, upperclassmen and those students who are yet to officially enroll in UE. For further info, contact the UE Claw Dean's Office, tel. 736-0401 loc. 204 or 736-0478, or log on to www.ue.edu.ph.

PWU wins in 13th Korean Student Sports Festival

THE KOREAN CULTURE OF THE PHILIPPINES WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY, represented by Park Dae, Shin Ah Hyun, Ra Kyung-ju, Park Jae-ik, Kim Hyo-Jin, Kim Jin-Young, Oh Ji-Hyun and Ko Ji-Sun score in the girls' dodgeball and eight skipping championship relay events. Still placed well on by race 2nd places and 1st runner-up in the overall ranking during the 13th Korean Student Sports Festival held at the Ultra Complex, Pasig City. Some 300 students from seven universities participated in the seasonal sports event which aims to promote unity and harmony between the Korean and Filipino students in the Philippines. Pwu's delegation presented a chance to PWU CEO and board trustee Alfredo Pascual and international Students Affairs director Estrella Dizon-Lorenzo.

Corazon Aquino Scholarship program launch

FIRST ASIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND HUMANITIES (FATIH) recently launched the Corazon C. Aquino Scholarship program which will benefit public-coming from Tanauan, Batangas public elementary schools. The scholars who will qualify under the program will enjoy scholarships from high school up to college level. Presented at the scholarship program launch were the Department of Education (DepEd) officials spearheaded by Undersecretary for Operations Dr. Daniel G. Bathan, officers of SEATH and Francis "Kiko" Dee, son of Viel Dee and grandson of former President Cory Aquino. Dee delivered a message of appreciation to SEATH for creating the scholarship program in honor of his grandmother.

IMC now accepting applicants for SY 2010-2011

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI CENTER (IMC) IN MALOLOS IS NOW accepting applicants for school year 2010-2011. The school opens at 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Monday through Friday this enrollment period. IMC has 4 levels of classes: Toddler (1 year old to 2 years old); Junior Level: Subjects taught are Reading, Language, Writing and Mathematics. There are 23 pupils who attended this said first summer classes. It started last April 5 and the culminating day was April 30. IMC-Malolos also accepts transferees in all levels. Visit the school located at Potenciano Subdivision, Sto. Rosario-Malolos City (in front of Bulacan Sports Complex).

Feati University takes off in 3rd Aerofest

AMAN MAYSAKAY, PAMAMAGITAN (DIRECTOR CAPT. JOVENA SALAZAR) about the passenger for flying at the 3rd edition of the annual "Feati Aerofest", a one-day aerofiesta show organized by Feati University. This year's Feati-Ifly Aerofest was held at Woodland Airpark in Bifiangbang, Pampanga. Among the event's highlights were the fly-ins of ultralight aircraft by the Bangkok City Flying Club, fly-in of the Augusta Westland AW109 by Feati vice-chair of the board Francisco Gaspinia, kite-making session with Alda Association president Orly Dagdagan, RC-airfoil-test, parachuting and the fly-in and landing of the PCG Islander-106A of the Aviation Group of the Philippine Coast Guard.

Nalo Fortified Science Discovery Center, Discovery Channel join forces

GET READY FOR THE BEST LEARNING EXPE-rience yet as the country's premier science and technology hands-on park, the Nalo Fortified Science Discovery Center (NFSDC) teams up with Discovery Channel to create the ultimate science learning center in the country, bringing science to life for visitors of all ages through a combination of science experiences and imaginative exhibits.

NFSDC's nine highly interactive galleries, housed in a 3,000 square meter, two-level air-conditioned with Discovery Channel's most popular content. These include "When We Left Earth: The Nasa Missions" and the first interactive "Extreme Weather" Exhibition, event featuring Discovery Channel personalities and exclusive Discovery Channel merchandise are also in the works. These are just some of the things you can look out for. The new gallery is set to open in October 2010 in the center's second floor.

The complex's iconic centerpiece is the Digitime Planetarium. Explore the stars at the epicenter of the 360-seater, 360-degree futuristic theater located on the center's ground level floor. Exciting short films produced by the American Museum of Natural History and Mirage 3D Films, to be featured in the Digitime Planetarium, will be screened by famous Hollywood celebrities like Steve Irwin, Tom Hanks, and Robert Redford! Watch out for new offerings that include Cosmic Collisions, Passport to Dinosaurs and Dawn of the Space Age.

For more details and ticket reservations, call Mr. (0920) 556-2196 or log on to http://www.nationalscience.gov.ph/nfsdc.

Preschool children learn financial literacy

IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO TEACH CHILDREN the value of money.

That, AXA Philippines gave financial literacy lessons to graduating preschoolers of the Barangka Elementary School in Barangka Ibaba, Brgy. Mabolo, Barangay 76, Cebu City.

Lessons in financial literacy were given through storytelling to the children and their parents during the graduation ceremonies at the Science Discovery Center in SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City.

The children belong to poor families in a community of 40 houses that AXA Philippines employees helped Barangka build.

Stephen Ong, AXA Philippines' finance director, said financial literacy could be easily understood by anyone and simply meant managing one's resources, no matter how small. For parents, it meant spending wisely and saving for the kids' future.

Introducing the idea of saving through piggy banks, Ong said, was an effective way of teaching children economic management. Hard work and perseverance were also tied to financial discipline, he said.

Alan Hermoso, president and chief executive officer of AXA Philippines, said they hoped that the children would break their shells, get good jobs, save, invest and help others.

Partners in nurses' training

TWO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, SEATTE aiming to improve nurses' communication skills and win scores, particularly in the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), have joined forces.

PRN Consultancy and Educational Services (PRNCES), through its chief operating officer Gary B. Bulseco, and Ma. E. Ambayec, president of Berbee 9 Learning Center, formalized the partnership recently.

PRNCES is a United States (Los Angeles) and Philippine-based Gregorio Village, Makati learning center established in 2003. It started as a NCLEX review center in Los Angeles, California for multi-cultural candidates who aimed to become registered nurses in the US. The nurses who passed the NCLEX (90-95 percent passing rate) are now employed in various American hospitals.

Berbee 9 Learning Center is a premier learning center with what is considered as the best IELTS review program in the Philippines. Berbee 9 is the only learning center in the country to achieve 100 percent passing rate several times.

PARTNERS: Bulseco and Ambayec

It continues to enhance its various English programs to meet the highest quality of learning. The programs include IELTS test preparation, English proficiency and test preparation for schools. It is formerly of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University and other top colleges and universities.

For more information, contact Berbee 9's representative Ellen Ambayec at 09163113223 and 09985549320.

Rise in BPO jobs leads to new courses

THE OLIVAREZ COLLEGE TAGAYTAY CITY is now offering bachelor of science degrees in accountancy and information technology (IT).

The opening of the new courses was prompted by the growing number of business process outsourcing (BPO) firms and their rising demand for accountants and information technology professionals.

Operations manager Iqbal Olivarez said the new courses were prompted by the stable demand for graduates in IT and accountancy.

Olivarez also said the school was not increasing its tuition fees, but even offering a 50-percent discount for freshmen and transferees who would pass the entrance examination, which was free. The test is given Monday-Saturday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

The school offers 100 percent free tuition fee for valedictorians, 50 percent for salutatorians, and 20 percent for first honorable mentions. Other scholarships are available. And there are 50 scholars in the school.

The Olivarez College Tagaytay also offers Bachelor of Science in Nursing, BS Business Administration (major in marketing management, Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED), Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHM).

The school also has two-year computer technician and six-month caregiver courses.

For details, call 046-4130669 local 307 or the 046-4133318/4130011 loc. 320, or 02-8885784 local 120, or 0928-7239589.

San Beda graduate school has new dean

DR. JOSEON RICARDO A. ROQUE HAS been appointed dean of the San Beda College (SBC) Graduate School of Business.

Following his appointment, Roque, currently deputy secretary general of the House of Representatives, has announced a fresh start for the school as it seeks to become one of the leading Catholic business education institutions in the Asia-Pacific.

In line with initiatives of the new SBC administration led by Dr. Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of the board of trustees, and Atty. Fr. Aloysius Ma. A. Mascariñas, OSB, rector-president of SBC Manila, the Graduate School of Business will have a new mission vision that will be more industry-responsive and innovative.

ROQUE

It will seek to create opportunities for Sedians who would distinguish themselves as leaders and Benedictine men of virtue founded on commitment to a life of prayer and fidelity to community spirit.

The new dean has a degree in economics, major in management, from SBC. He got his Masters in Business Administration with highest honors (*Dimicatorum*) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Management (*summa cum laude*) from the University of Santo Tomas.

Roque also finished two certificate courses at Harvard and Columbia universities on leadership and management development, and student personnel services, respectively.

He is a SBC cursor and regent of the Quezon City Polytechnic University.

Noy Aquino's blueprint . . .

From page B1

the National Book Development Board (NBDB), I take pride in one of our projects: The Quality Textbook Seal, a stamp of quality on our textbooks, much like the Good Housekeeping Seal for home products.

For the past two years, some of the best educators in the country have painstakingly looked at the quality of our mathematics textbooks, given detailed suggestions for improvement and awarded the seal to a chosen few.

The bad news is that many of our textbooks need major improvements, but the good news is that a few of them, with some revisions, have earned our quite well. Hopefully, the NBDB can do the same with textbooks in other subjects, such as Araling Panlipunan.

Quality textbooks

Noy says: "Poor quality textbooks have no place in our schools. I will not tolerate poor textbook quality in our schools. Textbooks will be judged by three criteria: Quality, lowest quality and worst quality."

Homeschooling issues aside, studies have shown that children who go to preschool usually have an edge over their counterparts who do not get the same opportunity to see ministry. The wealthy and the middle classes have the resources to send their children to preschools, even if many of these are quite costly, to prepare them for the so-called "big schools."

But preschools are not an option for many people in the lower income groups (though, frankly, several of my students manage to achieve a lot in college even though they did not go to preschool). In the very least, a year in preschool can be counted as the first year in basic education, sorely needed by our students who need more time and opportunity to develop basic skills.

Noy says: "We don't solve this (preschool deficiency by tinkering day-care centers/preschools. We need to build a proper preschool system and make this available to all children regardless of income. All public schools/children (and all public schools) will have preschooling as their introduction to formal schooling by 2014."

(To be continued next week)

E-mail the author at bbedoni@yahoo.com.

Uygongco Foundation Inc. gives P3.5M to Adopt-a-School program

THE LA FILIPINA UYGONGCO Corp. (LFUGC), through its chair Alfonso A. Uy is donating P3,500,000 to the Department of Education's Dagdag Adopt-a-School program through its corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm, the Uygongco Foundation Inc.

The money is expected to benefit some 30 public schools in Iloilo, Capiz and Guimaras provinces.

Education Secretary Mona D. Valisno said tomorrow that this would enable the Department of Education to address further issues like access, quality and relevance. At the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement with the LFUGC, Valisno said she hoped more partners from the private sector would follow suit.

She said the assistance would help make public schools more competitive and responsive to the human development needs of the country.

MOA SIGNING. From left, Ana Lee Uy, Terrence Uygongco, Secretary Valisno, Ms. Pia Pez Gan-Uygongco and Mar-Paul Gorissen

Uy said the gift was just the start of the foundation's long-term commitment to promote human development especially of the poor and marginalized people. He said they aimed to help improve access to basic education through the improvement of day care centers, scholarships for poor yet deserving students, support to teachers, among others. The foundation will also assist in the procurement of learning materials, providing health and nutrition promotion, teacher training and values formation.

Republic Act No. 8525, Section 3 establishing the Adopt-a-School Program and Providing Incentives Therefore and for Other Purposes," was enacted to encourage private companies to assist in the delivery of quality education in public schools in the country, particularly in poverty-stricken provinces.

Innovative enrolment system

THE REPUBLIC CENTRAL COLLEGES in Naguilan City, Batangas, will use the Academic Information Management System (AIMS) to manage its enrollment process.

Developed by Pinnacle Technologies Inc., AIMS covers everything from student applications, enrollment (registration and payment), faculty grading to graduation and exit procedures.

It is expected to eliminate long queue lines and tedious processes and procedures for both students and staff.

RCC president Dr. Victoria L. Angeles said the system made the application process more convenient for students enrolling in RCC.

She said they decided to adopt AIMS after several schools in the country that tried it expressed satisfaction with the results.

AIMS president Jose Tuazon said the technology would save an institution as much as 30 to 40 percent of its current information technology costs. It reduces time spent by staff on administrative tasks so they can focus on school management.

AIMS provides several modules simplifying school procedures and processes.

Call Pinnacle Technologies at 2779999 or e-mail sales@pinnacle.com.ph. Visit www.pinnacle.com.ph.

Pinnacle Technologies Inc. (PTI) is a pioneering IT company committed to creating opportunities that enable local government units and agencies, academic institutions and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to achieve financial stability, operational efficiency and global competitiveness through E-commerce.

Pinnacle president Jose Tuazon encourages all Philippine universities, schools and colleges to take advantage of this innovation which is 100 percent tested and is quick and easy to integrate to an existing school IT infrastructure.

"School year 2010-2011 is about to begin and we hope the academic circles will grab this excellent IT opportunity for both its staff and students . . . we promise and guarantee a complete a set-up in a week's time," adds Tuazon.

JOSE Tuazon, president of Pinnacle Technologies, and Dr. Victoria L. Angeles, president, RCC Pamparga (2nd and 3rd from left), are flanked by other RCC school officials as they sign the MOA.

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PDI-PVB 2010 WWII TRUE STORIES

A young runner named Ikang

(Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from the story that received prize in the PDI-Philippine Veterans Bank 2010 World War II Teen Writers Contest. Mr. Raymundo is an incoming senior at Valenzuela City Science High School.)

A 15-year-old girl outruns the Japanese and warns her uncles of impending doom

By John Raymundo

I NEVER EXPECTED that a fierce storm and a rampaging flood would unravel my Lola's untold tale about the Second World War.

Our home was submerged in chest-deep water and flood water as we had to evacuate to a school nearby. While the rain kept pouring and the flood kept rising, my grandfather entertained us with his unmatched but still effective jokes of old.

Me a war, Lola Ikang (Federica Esguerra Raymundo) who enthralled us with her story, one that we never told in so much detail before, sat over in her eighty-nine and daughters' his oil as comforted us with assurance and admiration, like little children at the feet of Lola Ikarong.

She was only 15 years old when Japanese soldiers occupied Ubando. Bridesmaid and began going around the town in small groups of 12. They were searching for guerillas and for anyone who was against the Japanese, really to shoot and kill anytime.

Lola Ikang knew of such guerillas who were resisting and fighting the Japanese. Four of them were her uncles who were part of a guerilla force that had their headquarters in her grandfather's house in Silog, a barrio in Valenzuela.

The Candido-Gozo fourteen of Lola Ikang's brothers—Agapito, Ramon, Francisco and Esteban—had banded with other men to fight the Japanese invaders. Knowing that her uncles' lives were at stake, Lola Ikang set out a mission to help the guerillas by being a watchgirl at a canteen.

Whenever she saw Japanese soldiers marching toward the direction of her uncles' hideout, she would walk briskly to outpace the enemy and get to her uncles as quickly as she could and warn them. "Umalis ka kayo diyan at may dalaw ang Japanese (Leave immediately because the Japanese are coming)!"

Lola Ikang volunteered independently as a runner for the band of men. She was never requested by any of them or asked by anyone to report about the activities of Japanese soldiers. Who wanted a girl for a runner in time of war? Unsurprisingly not even her parents and sisters knew that they had a family member who was a self-commissioned runner.

Lola Ikang had wanted to protect her uncles at all cost. Had a request from the guerillas was not necessary. Countless times her whispered warnings saved the lives of these men and their companions.

One time she chanced upon the execution of several men identified as guerillas by a young woman and her family. Despite the horror that she saw with her own eyes, Lola Ikang bravely walked among piles of dead bodies to see if her uncles were among those who had been hunted down and killed. Thankfully, they were not there. All the more she became resolute in resolving to help her uncles and their guerilla force escape the Japanese rabids.

Guerillas. Machine guns. Japanese soldiers. The cold bloodied annihilation of men. Lola Ikang saw these all but she had no fear to speak of. Her childhood must have molded her brave heart.

Unlike her two sisters, Lola Ikang did not keep easy by helping with the chores at home. Instead, she would cut short to the rice fields to reach herself in place, to ride the carabao which became her constant companion. She frequented fishponds and the river to fatigue fruitless penny clothes, learning for extra coin changes for the family's dinner. She gathered wood regularly to be used for fuel in cooking meals. She also sold packs of yuca for feeding animals at 10 pesos per sack. This was her contact until the Japanese came. She got and independently proved useful during the war.

Once while walking along the river dike, Lola Ikang became aware she was passing through enemy territory. She sensed there were Japanese soldiers lurking around the area. She did not see any, though, for just as she was starting to think she was safe, she heard a gun being fired. She soon realized she was the target as there was no one else in sight. A Japanese soldier kept firing at her but, inevitably not one bullet hit her. Lola Ikang recounts this without fear but with deep gratefulness.

"Maigting pinapasi ko ang Amerikanong sundalo (I quickly informed the Americans)," she said.

Lola Ikang had accomplished her final mission.

I think my Lola should have been rewarded for her being a woman. I think she should have had her share of lunch pay, unlike her Uncle Oting, Kiko and Ambrosio. But what the hell, she did it for love, without expecting anything in return. She did it out of love for her uncles.

Lola Ikang left her story with a short message for today's youth: You should care for your people and your country. The little that you can do may be enough to save the lives of people who are fighting for freedom.

(FROM left) Philippine Veterans Bank president Ricardo Bolisito, teacher-coach Melvin Navarro, Federica and John Raymundo, and Learning section editor Cielo Banal Feronera

Lessons from a mobile phone

By Linda B. Bolido

FOR A GROWING NUMBER OF public school teachers, many in barrios reach places, access to books and current educational materials but become as easy as—even easier than—text messaging.

And the technology is helping make students more interested and engaged in classroom activities.

By pressing a key on a customized Nokia 3G (third generation) N95 phone, with a memory capacity of eight gigabytes, educational material is downloaded to a convenient, to which the class is switched, allowing the whole class to watch it.

This project is part of the global Bridges.org initiative of Nokia, the Finland-based cellular phone manufacturer, the United Nations Development Program, International Youth Foundation and Procter and Gamble, the biggest providers of educational materials in the world.

What the project has done is turn the ubiquitous cellular phones into cyber links, almost computer-like devices that connect teachers in a remote corner of rural Luzon to innovative educational materials that are internationally known sources.

CUSTOMIZED
N95 phone

The Philippines, reputed to be the texting capital of the world, piloted the project, Text2Teach. But now the project has gone past the short message service (SMS) although texting remains a complementary facility.

With the customized phone, teachers can browse directly a cache of materials on their subject areas and download resources into the TV.

Nokia has embedded into the mobile phones the Nokia Education Delivery (NED) applications.

With NED, teachers just have to browse through the menus and click on the items they need. In the initial phase of Text2Teach, teachers were encouraged to report about their activities, challenges and successes through text messages.

Gina Hobbs, Nokia Philippines' program manager for bridges.org, says teachers now only send text messages if they have questions.

Local partners such as Smartbuilders Inc. (SPI) and Globe Telecom provide additional logistics for the project—flyte materials download worth a total of P1,000 and free air time load of P150 a month.

Curriculum-appropriate

The Department of Education and the Philippine-based Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Center for Innovation and Technology (Innotech) provide technical guidance to make sure materials are appropriate to the curriculum.

Hobbs says, "NED does not replace the tools that maximize the use of the educational activity. The innovation is simply an additional tool to make teaching more efficient and more effective."

As "the program is now something already available," Hobbs says it has enormous possibilities for just-in-formal schooling but also in informal and adult education and skills training, among others.

After pilot testing Text2Teach in 40 schools, the program has reached 120 schools in 11 areas benefiting about 21,000 grades 5 and 6 students as of February.

Marlene C. Catalayo, manager of the Center for Social Development of AFI, says an important contribution to choosing beneficiary schools is the willingness of local governments and Depdal local officers to support the project. The area has to have mobile phone signals and reliable power source.

She says they are targeting Grades 1-6 lessons "in sync 9 to 11...children (have been found) to be more receptive to new knowledge. The child learns to think and then to greater interaction between students and teachers."

Hobbs adds the intermediate grades are a critical time for this to when many children drop out of school. "We have to motivate them to stay in school."

He says, at the moment, all materials are prepackaged but later on, schools can create their own videos of things specific and relevant to their areas.

The sponsors are also looking into requests to set up networks of TV sets as more classes benefit from one download.

STORY-TELLING IN BATANES

Over 100 pupils from Basco Elementary School in Batanes are to participate in a story-telling session organized by Gigi and the Reading Recreation Foundation Inc. (ReadR), at 4:00 the Manila Memorial Cemetery Chapel in Parañaque.

Sitting on the steps of St. John the Worker church, the children listened to Louie Angeles read "A Bird, a Banana and a Bottle" and to Philippine Heart Center director Jose Jesengoff's reading of "Gus: I am Holding Daddy's Hand." Dr. Charlie Cruz-Lucero read a story in Ivatan language, "Nag-mga Bitsin sa Langit." Participants in the Batanes Photo Safari joined in the distribution of books for the children donated by Books across the Seas. Peter Battle, former teacher and principal of Basco Elementary School, organized the activity. A Quiet Community Library will soon be set up in Daddy's Hennessy Cafe as a project of the Manila Harbour's Batanes Photo Safari (Sunday, 2010 to the present).